

# LECTURES ON RAJPUT HISTORY

ANIL CHANDRA BANERJEE, M.A., Ph.D.



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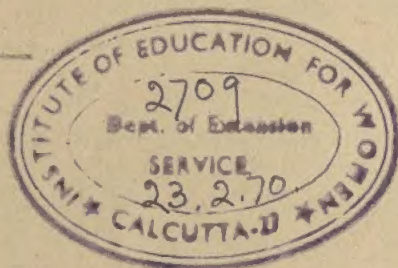
RAGHUNATH PRASAD NOPANY LECTURES (1960)  
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By

ANIL CHANDRA BANERJEE, M.A., Ph.D.

Principal, Maharaja Manindra Chandra College  
Lecturer in History, Calcutta University  
Author of *The Rajput States and the East India  
Company*, *Peshwa Madhav Rao I*, *The Eastern  
Frontier of British India*, *Medieval Studies*,  
*Indian Constitutional Documents*, etc.

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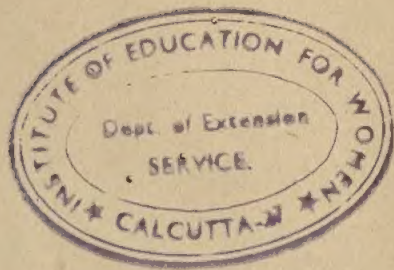
## PREFACE

The liberality of the founders of Raghunath Prasad Nopany Lectureship provided for me an opportunity to deal with some aspects of the history of the Rajput principalities from the earliest times to the imposition of British suzerainty over Rajasthan. I have tried to renew my acquaintance with the original sources, but in view of their volume and diversity it was obviously impossible to cover the whole ground. As the lectures were intended primarily for the general public I had to avoid controversies in which the professional student alone is interested. The lectures have been printed exactly in the form in which they were delivered in December, 1961, with a few verbal changes here and there. The Appendix is an addition; it did not form part of the lectures.

The late Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, the most far-sighted educationist of modern India, made provision for special study of Rajput History in the post-graduate classes of Calcutta University. The late Professor Hem Chandra Raychaudhuri advised me to take up this subject in my post-graduate course. The late Professor Indubhusan Banerjee provided for me an opportunity of teaching this subject in the post-graduate classes. To their memory I offer my humble homage.

I took lessons on Rajput History from Professor Hem Chandra Ray and Professor Subimal Chandra Dutt. To these scholarly and inspiring teachers I owe my abiding interest in the subject. The following pages contain many traces of facts and ideas which I received from them, but they must not be held responsible for any of my mistakes or misinterpretations. My debt to them cannot be acknowledged in formal terms.

A. C. BANERJEE



## CONTENTS

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Page</i>
LECTURE I: Origin of the Rajputs ...	1
LECTURE II: Assimilation of the Rajputs ...	30
LECTURE III: Resistance to Invasions ...	52
LECTURE IV: The Rajputs and the Mughals ...	84
LECTURE V: Medieval Rajput Polity ...	109
LECTURE VI: Rajasthan in Decline ...	136
• APPENDIX: Note on Tod's <i>Annals</i> ...	177



## LECTURE I

### ORIGIN OF THE RAJPUTS

A proper appreciation of the role played by the Rajputs in Indian history can hardly ignore certain broad racial and environmental factors from which it derived colour and emphasis. We have not yet devised a technique of investigation which can isolate the relative weight of racial or hereditary traits and the influence of geographical, social and cultural environment in the evolution of a given historical entity. But it is generally recognized that both heredity and environment count in the making of a people, and although psychological or anthropological analysis is clearly beyond the historian's province he cannot explain the emergence of a new historical force without looking into its origins.

The Rajputs certainly represented a new historical force in early medieval India and they dominated the Indian scene for several centuries. As Vincent Smith said many years ago, "They (*i.e.* the Rajput clans) became so prominent that the centuries from the death of Harsha to the Muslim conquest of northern India, extending in round numbers from the middle of the seventh to the close of the twelfth century, might be called with propriety the Rajput period"<sup>1</sup>. The political authority of the Rajput clans was, of course, confined to northern and western India; eastern India as well as the South remained outside their political jurisdiction. But northern and western India assumed a new significance during this period in view of the continuous threat of Muslim invasion. That

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<sup>1</sup> *Oxford History of India*, 3rd (revised) edition, p. 190.



threat became a material factor in Indian history with the Arab occupation of Sind and reached a further stage with the Turkish occupation of the Punjab. Geography made the Rajputs the *Pratiharas* or door-keepers of India. The immunity of the South to foreign incursions till the close of the 13th century was due to a large extent to the strenuous discharge by the Rajputs of this tremendous responsibility. While the conquering Cholas directed their military resources to naval and political exploits outside the boundaries of India, the Rajputs kept the north-western invaders at bay for several centuries and protected the sanctity of the Indian soil as long as possible. When, finally, they failed to protect the dyke, the whole of Northern India succumbed to the flood of Turkish rule and the opening of the South was only a question of time. With all its territorial limitations, therefore, the political power of the Rajputs gave a definite shape to historical forces affecting the entire sub-continent. There was a compelling force as also a historical purpose behind the chivalrous exploits of the Rajputs. From this point of view it would not be wrong to speak of a 'Rajput period' of Indian history.

The rise of the Rajputs to political prominence was seemingly accidental. Vincent Smith, who was the first European writer—apart from Tod, of course—to appreciate their historical significance, said that "the Rajput clans, never heard of in earlier times,.....begin from the eighth century to play a conspicuous part in the history of northern and western India"<sup>2</sup>. The fall of the Gupta Empire created a political vacuum, leading to a scramble for power among various local dynasties of which the Pushyabhutis attained ephemeral importance during the

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<sup>2</sup> *Oxford History of India*, 3rd (revised) edition, p. 190.

brilliant rule of Harsha. A second—and worse—period of disintegration followed his death, and Northern India did not attain political stability till the Gurjara-Pratiharas, a Rajput dynasty, succeeded in establishing an empire larger in extent and stronger in sustained power than the Pushyabhuti Empire. Meanwhile the Arabs had occupied Sind. The eighth century witnessed the emergence of two historical forces of enduring significance: the appearance of the Muslims in the combined role of invaders and rulers and the appearance of the Rajputs in the role of defenders of the old order. It seemed as if the old Indian dynasties were too exhausted to play an active political-cum-military role and a new element in the population—more vigorous, less spoilt by climate, intoxicated by the first taste of power—came forward to fill up the vacuum and create new history.

This striking historical phenomenon demands an explanation, and it is here that the question of racial and environmental factors comes in. The Rajput dynasties claimed—*after* their accession to power—descent from the ancient Kshatriyas of Brahmanical literature, and this claim was accepted by their Brahmin panegyrists who dominated contemporary society. Can historical criticism accept this interpretation of their origin? If there were really no break in the continuity of the traditional system, it would not be easy to explain either the rise of so many ruling families with a dynastic background which required careful explanation from Brahmin courtiers, or the new vigour and tenacity with which the struggle against the Muslim invaders was carried on for several centuries. In any case, the replacement of old dynasties by new dynasties of uncertain origin is a *prima facie* feature of the political changes during the "Rajput period", and there should be a historical clue to this apparent puzzle.



The available evidence on the origin of different Rajput dynasties has been scrutinised thoroughly by many writers during the last fifty years, and it is hardly possible to throw new light on this controversial subject on the basis of the data already examined. But it is possible to emphasize certain points and to see the picture as a whole instead of viewing it from the angle of any particular dynasty. The chronology of the dynastic inscriptions should also be kept in view so that the development of a conventional pattern of genealogical explanation might not escape our notice.

The Gurjara-Pratiharas were chronologically the earliest, and historically the most important of the Rajput dynasties. The earliest inscription referring to the origin of the dynasty is the undated Gwalior (Sagar-Tal) stone inscription<sup>3</sup> of Bhoja I, according to which the ancestor of the family was Saumitri or Lakshmana, the younger brother of the Epic hero Rama, who was "the door-keeper (*pratihara*), since he repelled (the enemies) in the battle with Meghanada". Moreover, Vatsaraja is described as "foremost among the most distinguished Kshatriyas" and as one who "stamped the noble race of Ikshvaku with his own name by virtue of his blameless conduct". This inscription must have been issued some years before 893 A.D., the earliest epigraphic date for the reign of Bhoja's successor (Mahendrapala). It claims solar descent for the dynasty and explains the term *Pratihara*, but it is significantly silent on the term *Gurjara*. A different explanation of the term *Pratihara* is given in the Jodhpur inscription of Bauka<sup>4</sup> (of the Pratihara dynasty of Rajputana) which says: "Inasmuch as the very brother of Ramabhadra performed the duty of door-keeper (*pratihara*) this illustrious

<sup>3</sup> *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 99-114. *Annual Report*, Archaeological Survey of India, 1903-1904, pp. 277-285.

<sup>4</sup> *J.R.A.S.*, 1894, p. 4. *Ep. Ind.*, XVIII, pp. 87-99.

clan came to be known as Pratihara". This variation does not affect the main point, *viz.* the solar origin of the dynasty, which is upheld in this inscription also. So far as literary evidence is concerned we find Rajasekhara, the well known dramatist, describing his patron Mahendrapala as "ornament of the race of Raghu"<sup>5</sup> and "leader of Raghu's family".<sup>6</sup> Mahipala is described by the same dramatist as "the pearl-jewel of the lineage of Raghu"<sup>7</sup>. Thus the tradition of solar descent seems to have taken root. In the Harsa stone inscription of Chahamana Vighraharaja II (dated 973 A.D.)<sup>8</sup> there is a reference to "the universal sovereign of the earth in Raghu's race" who is usually identified with one of the later Pratihara monarchs.<sup>9</sup>

• • This epigraphic tradition of solar descent is connected chronologically with the period during which the Gurjara-Pratiharas were the dominant ruling dynasty in Northern India. The testimony of Rajasekhara has little independent value, for a court poet had to glorify his patrons and to exalt their lineage. This tradition might have been acceptable if it had originated at the initial stage of the rise of the dynasty and not at that stage of imperial prominence where the temptation to establish a link with the heroic age of the Epics would be readily endorsed by obliging Brahmin courtiers. The inscriptions are silent on the question of origin till the glorious days of Bhoja.

Another difficulty in the way of accepting the epigraphic tradition is its silence in regard to the term *Gurjara* associated almost inseparably with the family name *Pratihara* as also with the history of the dynasty. What is par-

<sup>5</sup> *Viddhasalabhanjika*, I. 6.

<sup>6</sup> *Balabharata*.

<sup>7</sup> *Balabharata*, I. 7.

<sup>8</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, II, pp. 116-130. *Indian Antiquary*, 1913, pp. 57-64.

<sup>9</sup> Bhandarkar, *Ind. Ant.*, XLII (1913), pp. 58, 62. H. C. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. II, p. 1064.



ticularly significant in this connection is the well known explanation given in the Rajor stone inscription (dated 959 A.D.) of the reign of Mathanadeva<sup>10</sup>, a feudatory of Vijayapala of Kanauj. The word *Gurjara-Pratihara* in this inscription has been taken to mean that the Pratiharas were a clan of the Gurjaras, a foreign tribe of Central Asian origin which entered India along with the Hunas. The suggestion that the word *Gurjara* should be taken in a geographical sense to indicate the "land of the Gurjaras"<sup>11</sup> is unacceptable because in the same inscription we have reference to "fields cultivated by the Gurjaras". The same word could hardly have been used in the same record to denote a region as well as a tribe. The statements of Arab writers like Al Ma'sudi on the struggle between the Muslims and the *Jurz* indicate that the word *Gurjara* was used ordinarily in the tribal—and not in the geographical—sense. The same conclusion follows from references in Rashtrakuta records to their struggle with the Pratiharas. For example, Govinda III is described as "destruction to the valour of the head of the thundering Gurjaras"<sup>12</sup>.

Ordinarily an isolated reference in a single inscription of an obscure prince should not be allowed to set aside a century-old epigraphic and literary tradition. But the Rajor inscription deserves special consideration because it is not directly connected with the imperial Pratihara family and is, therefore, comparatively free from court influence, and also because it is the only epigraphic record which gives us an explanation of the curious compound *Gurjara-Pratihara*. It fills up a gap which the composers of the imperial genealogies appear to have ignored deliberately.

<sup>10</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, III, pp. 263-267.

<sup>11</sup> C. V. Vaidya, *History of Medieval Hindu India*, Vol. II, pp. 31-32.

<sup>12</sup> Sanjan copper plate of Amoghavarsha I (*Ep. Ind.*, XVIII, pp. 235-257).

Although the evidence of the Rajor inscription seems to be decisive (provided the foreign origin of the Gurjaras is accepted), some supplementary points may be noted in this connection. The Kanarese poet Pampa calls Mahipala *Ghurjararaja*. He could hardly have used the word *Ghurjara* in a geographical sense, for the Gurjara country was only a small portion of Mahipala's vast empire and it would be unusual to designate him as the ruler of that small portion only. To take the word in a tribal sense seems to be more appropriate in the context of his imperial position. A more significant fact is the use of "certain outlandish personal names" by the Pratiharas of Mandor from whom the imperial Pratiharas might have branched off. Thus the Jodhpur inscription of Bauka<sup>13</sup> mentions two alternative names for Harichandra and Narabhata—Rohilladdhi and Pellapelli respectively. The use of two names—one Sanskritic and the other apparently non-Indian or non-Sanskritic—seems to be an indication of the survival of non-Indian influences in a Hinduised family.<sup>14</sup>

It must, however, be remembered in this connection that the Jackson-Bhandarkar theory of the foreign origin of the Gurjaras<sup>15</sup> cannot be treated as anything more than a working hypothesis. The arguments on which that theory is based are open to substantial criticism.<sup>16</sup> The verbal similarity between *Gurjara* and *Khazar* cannot be stretched too far as historical evidence unless it is reinforced by more positive arguments based on well ascertained facts. It has been argued that "there are positive grounds for dissociating the Gurjaras.....with the

<sup>13</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, XVIII, pp. 87-99.

<sup>14</sup> Harichandra is described as a "Brahmin well versed in the meaning of the Vedas and the Sastras".

<sup>15</sup> *Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. I, Part I, Appendix III. J.B.B.R.A.S., Vol. XXI, pp. 413 ff.

<sup>16</sup> B. N. Puri, *The History of the Gurjara-Pratiharas*, Chapter I.



Hunas". It is true that literary and epigraphic references to the Hunas are silent in regard to the Gurjaras, but in view of the admittedly subordinate position of the Gurjaras in relation to the Hunas this *argumentum ex silentio* need not be given much weight. Moreover, it is unnecessary to assume any close connection between the Hunas and the Gurjaras in order to prove the latter's foreign origin. Our information about the foreign incursions of the later Gupta period is very unsatisfactory, and we cannot exclude the possibility that the Gurjaras entered India before the Hunas, or along with the Hunas, in a separate stream. That there is no record of their "clash with the native powers" is hardly surprising in view of the paucity of sources relating to that disturbed period.

The distribution of the Gujar population in the wide belt of territory from Peshawar in the north-west to Rohilkhand in the east, in Jammu and Kashmir, in the eastern districts of Madhya Pradesh, and in Rajputana is good *prima facie* evidence of tribal migration from beyond the Khyber Pass. The Gurjaras could hardly have spread themselves over such a vast area if they had been, as a recent writer has suggested, "living in obscurity somewhere in Rajputana" before "lust for power impelled them to rush head-long that they came into contact with others and carved out a number of Kingdoms which ultimately formed the nucleus of the big Gurjara empire." Apart from the absence of any reference to the Gurjaras in pre-Gupta or early Gupta records—a negative fact of some significance—it is difficult to believe that a small local tribe of Rajputana could multiply so as to provide migrants for the vast area indicated above. Nor should it be forgotten that the political authority of the Gurjara-Pratiharas never extended to the Peshawar region, Central Punjab or Jammu and Kashmir, so that we cannot connect the Gujar settle-

ments in these areas with the expansion of the Gurjara political power. In the absence of satisfactory epigraphic evidence the distribution of the Gujar population should be accepted as tentative evidence of the foreign origin of the Gurjaras and, consequently, of the Gurjara-Pratiharas.

Bardic tradition describes the Pratiharas as one of the four tribes belonging to the *Agnikula* group, the other three being the Paramaras, the Chaulukyas and the Chahamanas. The story of the fire-pit on the summit of Mount Abu is fairly well known, but it is necessary to remember that it has different versions. For example, the version recorded by Tod (which was based on the *Prithviraja Raso*) was different from the version accepted by Cunningham.<sup>17</sup> According to Tod, four heroes came out of the sacrificial fire in response to the prayer of the sages to Mahadeva for help against the *daityas* who were disturbing their sacrifices. Among them one "had not a warrior's mien" and was placed as "guardian of the gate"—an obvious explanation of the term *Pratihara*. "A second issued forth, and being formed in the palm (*chaloo*) of the hand was named Chalooka. The third was Paramar, and the fourth Chauhan". In Cunningham's version, the Solanki was born from Brahma's essence, the Paramar from Siva's essence, the Pratihara from Devi's essence and "from the fount of fire sprang up.....the Chahuwan".<sup>18</sup> Apart from these two main versions, there is one tradition ascribing to Indra the creation of a "mace-bearing figure" from the fire-pit who was given the name *Paramara* (slayer of the enemy).<sup>19</sup> Abul Fazl records the tradition of the fire-origin of the Paramaras in a different form.<sup>20</sup> There

<sup>17</sup> *Annals of Rajasthan*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 113. *Annual Report*, Archaeological Survey of India, II, p. 254.

<sup>18</sup> See *Ep. Ind.*, V, Appendix No. 12.

<sup>19</sup> *Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. X, p. 485.

<sup>20</sup> Blochmann and Jarrett, Vol. II, p. 214.

the hero is born in a temple of fire to protect fire worship against the intrigues of the Buddhists.

Apart from the inherent improbability of the supernatural origin of the founders of several ruling families, we must not overlook the admittedly unhistorical character of the *Prithviraja Raso* attributed to Chand Bardai<sup>21</sup>. It has been reported that the story of *Agnikula* is not mentioned at all in the original version of the *Raso* preserved in the Fort Library at Bikaner<sup>22</sup>. In that case it must be taken as a very late fabrication. As the different versions of the story are obviously derived from a single tradition their authenticity is open to a common suspicion.

The epigraphic records of the Pratiharas and the Chahamanas do not refer to the *Agnikula* story at all. Inscriptions of the reign of Chaulukya Bhima II, however, refer to the story in connection with the Paramaras. Abhayatilaka Gani, the well known commentator on Hemachandra's *Dvyasrayamahakavya*, says that the Paramaras were created by the sage Vasishtha to help him in his quarrel with Visvamitra over the cow Nandini. Thus the *Agnikula* story was not unknown in the Chaulukya Kingdom, but it was not connected locally with the origin of the ruling dynasty of Gujarat.

Padmagupta's *Navasahasanka-charita*, which was composed towards the beginning of the 11th century, narrates the story of the fire-origin of the Paramaras<sup>23</sup>. The hero sprang out of the sacrificial fire on Mount Abu at the behest of the great sage Vasishtha and forcibly wrested his cow from Visvamitra. It is obvious that the court poet gave the official version of the origin of the ruling dynasty. It is, therefore, not quite correct to say: "The earliest

<sup>21</sup> See: JASB, 1887, Vol. LV, pp. 5-65; JBRAS, 1927, Vol. III, pp. 203-211.

<sup>22</sup> *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XVI, pp. 738-746.

<sup>23</sup> See XI, 64-76.



reference to the fire-pit origin of the Paramaras is contained in records which belong to about the middle of the 11th century"<sup>24</sup>. It is true that the earliest *epigraphic* mention of the story is to be found in the Udaipur *Prasasti* of Udayaditya<sup>25</sup> which says: "Through his (Vasishtha's) power, a hero arose from the fire-pit (on that lofty mountain, called Arbuda), who.....brought back the cow .....". This story was repeated in several later inscriptions<sup>26</sup>, but its origin is clearly to be found in Padmagupta's work which is historically as valuable—or as open to the charge of partiality and exaggeration—as any epigraph. The story gained wide currency in the 12th and 13th centuries, as references in Chaulukya inscriptions and in Abhayatilaka Gani's commentary show. It would not be surprising, therefore, if it found mention even in the original version of the *Prithviraja Raso*. It is not possible, in the face of this evidence, to accept the view that "the Agnikula myth.....is a fabrication of perhaps the fifteenth century"<sup>27</sup>.

Although the details of the *Agnikula* story were not accepted by the European writers, they generally used it as corroborative evidence in favour of the theory of the foreign origin of the Rajputs. For example, Vincent Smith quoted with apparent approval Crooke's remark that the story "represents a rite of purgation by fire, the scene of which was southern Rajputana, whereby the impurity of the foreigners was removed and they became fitted to enter the Hindu caste system".<sup>28</sup> This statement implies a geographical connection between Rajputana and the four dynasties of the *Agnikula* group. It also implies a ceremony

<sup>24</sup> H. C. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. II, p. 841.

<sup>25</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, I, p. 236.

<sup>26</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, II, p. 180; XIV, p. 295; IX, p. 148; etc.

<sup>27</sup> D. Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> *Early History of India*, 4th ed., p. 412.

of purification by which foreigners were admitted formally into the traditional Hindu caste system as Kshatriyas.

The theory that Bhinmal in southern Rajputana was the centre of the Pratihara dominions at the initial stage<sup>29</sup> has been challenged and we are now told that the early Pratiharas had their seat of power at Ujjain.<sup>30</sup> But *Gurjaratra-bhumi* or central Rajputana occupies an important place in Pratihara history. Different branches of the Chahamanas ruled over different parts of Rajputana, e.g., Sakambhari, Ranthambhor, Nadol, Jalor, Chandravati and Abu. Although Malava was the centre of Paramara power, minor branches of the clan ruled over Chandravati and Abu, Banswara, Jalor and Kiradu. The Chaulukyas conquered Abu and from time to time cast their covetous eyes on Bhinmal, Nadol and other parts of Rajputana. Thus the four dynasties connected by tradition with the *Agnikula* story were associated geographically with the Abu region. The importance which is accorded uniformly to 'Arbuda' in different versions of the story might have some historical basis.

The *Navasahasanka-charita* gives us the earliest recorded version of the *Agnikula* story. The Paramaras of Malava were not directly connected with the Abu region till the days of Vakpati-Munja who, we are told, "led his army into the neighbourhood of Mount Abu" and, "having conquered Mewar and its neighbourhood, reached the country of Marwar"<sup>31</sup>. These exploits might have brought Mount Abu within the range of the contemporary poet's fancy, but the question of removing "the impurity of the foreigners" does not arise in connection with the Vasishta-Visvamitra quarrel which provided the occasion for the

<sup>29</sup> Smith, *Early History of India*, 4th ed., p. 393.

<sup>30</sup> R. P. Tripathi, *History of Kanauj*, p. 226.

<sup>31</sup> D. C. Ganguly, *History of the Paramara Dynasty*, p. 22.

creation of the mythological ancestor of the Parāmāra dynasty. Padmagupta's story could, however, hardly be an isolated product of the poet's fertile imagination. Its origin might be traced to an ancient tradition incorporated in the *Ramayana*<sup>32</sup> which says that the Sakas, the Pahlavas, the Kambojas and other non-Aryan tribes were created by Vasishtha to fight against Visvamitra in connection with the dispute over the *kamadhenu*<sup>33</sup>. The similarity is quite evident and it was quite natural for Padmagupta to utilise an Epic tradition which had acquired some sanctity through the lapse of time.

Probably the Muslim menace was not considered to be serious for the Rajput principalities of central and western India at the time when Padmagupta's *kavya* was composed. The first phase of Arab aggression after the conquest of Sind (which had been met by the imperial Pratiharas) was over; the Muslims of Sind were divided and weak. The Turkish phase had hardly begun; Sultan Mahmud's raids had not yet affected Rajputana and the Ganges-Jumna Doab. It was enough that the hero emerging from the fire-pit should defend a Brahmin sage against a Kshatriya: it was not necessary that he should play the role of a defender of the faith against non-believers.

The *Raso* version of the *Agnikula* story accepted by Tod was much later in date and echoed the dangers of the age of Turkish conquest. The *mlechchhas* who destroyed ancient temples and broke venerated idols might well be compared with *daityas* who rendered impure the sacrifices of the sages. It was natural, therefore, that the story should take a new turn, investing the hero with the halo of a champion of the orthodox religion. His supernatural birth from a sacrificial fire-pit seemed to give him divine

<sup>32</sup> *Balakanda*, Cantos 54-55.

<sup>33</sup> D. Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, pp. 4-5.



commission for the destruction of the *daityas*. The *Raso* story would thus appear to be an excellent mythological interpretation of the struggle of the Rajput ruling clans against the Muslim invaders. It has faint echoes in epigraphic as well as in literary evidence. An inscription of the 14th century<sup>34</sup>, for example, says that when the Solar and Lunar races became extinct, the sage Vatsa created Chahamana to suppress the *asuras* disturbing his sacrificial rites. According to the *Prithviraja-vijaya*<sup>35</sup>, Chahamana was born in the *surya-mandala* to destroy the *mlechchhas*.

Even in this later version of the *Agnikula* story there is no direct reference to any ceremony of purification intended to facilitate foreigners' admission into Hindu society. But we are probably entitled to draw the inference that the dynasties of the *Agnikula* group were recognized as Kshatriyas rather late in history and presumably in recognition of their struggle for Hinduism against the Muslim invaders<sup>36</sup>. It is, however, difficult to say why the story in any of its versions does not cover the other Rajput clans which satisfy these two conditions, e.g. the Chandellas, the Kalachuris, the Gahadavalas. Probably it was current chiefly in and around Rajputana and related to those Rajput clans only which were geographically connected with that region. Mount Abu, as we know, plays an important role in the story.

Whatever the implications of the *Agnikula* story might be, it is necessary to study it in the light of the available epigraphic evidence on the origin of each of the four dynasties grouped together in literary tradition. So far as the Pratiharas are concerned, we have seen that epigraphic

<sup>34</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, IX, p. 79.

<sup>35</sup> See II, 68.

<sup>36</sup> D. Sharma (*Early Chauhan Dynasties*, p. 6) draws this inference in the case of the Chahamanas.

testimony is almost conclusive: the connection between the Pratiharas and the Gurjaras—in all probability a foreign tribe—seems to be well established. In the case of the Chahamanas, however, there is no such virtually decisive epigraphic evidence. The *Agnikula* story is unknown to the Chahamana inscriptions and literary works connected with the dynasty (with the exception of the *Prithviraja Raso*) even as late as the 14th century. It is not mentioned, for example, in the Bijolia stone inscription<sup>37</sup> (c. 1169 A.D.) or in the *Prithviraja-vijaya*, or in the *Hammiramahakavya* of Nayachandra Suri, the grandson of the guru of Hammira of Ranthambhor who was defeated by Alauddin Khalji in 1301 A.D. That inscription records the birth of Samanta, the earliest representative of the Chahamana family on its list, in the *Vatsa* gotra at Ahichchhatrapura which has been identified by Ojha with Nagaur in the former Jodhpur State. The connection with the sage Vatsa is mentioned in other inscriptions<sup>38</sup> also. It is presumably on this ground that the Chahamanas have been described as the descendants of a Brahmin claiming the *Vatsa gotra*<sup>39</sup>.

The priestly affiliation of the Chahamanas has been recognized also by D. R. Bhandarkar, in whose opinion they belonged originally to a foreign tribe known as the Khazars (later called the Gurjaras)<sup>40</sup>. Although it was quite possible for a family of foreign extraction to secure recognition as Brahmins, Bhandarkar's arguments in favour of treating the early Chahamanas as members of a priestly class are not quite convincing. He relies practically on the reference to the *Vatsa gotra* in the Bijolia stone inscription which, however, is too far away chrono-

<sup>37</sup> JASB, 1886, Vol. XL, Part 1, pp. 14-15, 28-32, 40-46.

<sup>38</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, IX, pp. 70 ff., 79 ff.

<sup>39</sup> D. Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, p. 7.

<sup>40</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, XLI, pp. 25-29.

logically from the origin of the family. His arguments connecting the Khazars with the Chahamanas have also been challenged<sup>41</sup>. In the present state of our knowledge it is not possible to say that there is any really conclusive evidence in support of the theory of foreign origin in the case of the Chahamanas. Apart from the vague implications of the *Agnikula* story there is hardly anything on record which prevents us from ascribing to them an indigenous origin. They might or might not have been Brahmins or Kshatriyas. They might have been a clan without social distinction to which solar origin<sup>42</sup> or Brahmanical origin was attributed by courtiers after their rise to political power.

In the case of the Paramaras the earliest available epigraphic evidence against the theory of foreign origin is practically decisive. The Harsola plates<sup>43</sup> (948 A.D.), which are at least half a century older than the *Navasahasanka-charita*, state that the Paramara ruler Vappairaja (Vakpatiraja I) was descended from the family (*kula*) of the Rashtrakuta ruler Akalavarsha (Krishna III). This clear testimony of the earliest available inscription of the dynasty cannot be set aside by later literary or epigraphic evidence. Moreover, the connection between the Rashtrakutas and the Paramaras seems to be established by the assumption by Vakpati-Munja of distinctive Rashtrakuta titles like *amoghavarsha*, *srivallabha* and *prithvivallabha*<sup>44</sup>. The significance of the use of the *garuda* symbol on both Rashtrakuta and Paramara grants should also be noted in this connection<sup>45</sup>. If the Paramaras came to Malava from

<sup>41</sup> D. Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, p. 8.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. reference to *surya-mandala* in the *Prithviraja-rajya* and the *Hammiramahakavya* in connection with the birth of the eponymous hero Chahamanas.

<sup>43</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, XIX, p. 236.

<sup>44</sup> D. C. Ganguly, *History of the Paramara Dynasty*, p. 9.

<sup>45</sup> H. C. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. II, p. 842.



the Deccan<sup>46</sup>,—it is quite likely that it was a case of migration from the south,—they could hardly be the descendants of foreigners entering India through the north-western gate.

According to D. R. Bhandarkar, the Chaulukyas of Gujarat were “in all likelihood, of Gujar origin”. He found no epigraphic evidence in support of this assumption, but in his opinion “there can be no doubt that Gujarat of the Bombay Presidency bore this name only after the Chaulukyas conquered and occupied it. If the Chaulukyas had not been of Gujar extraction, it is inconceivable how that province could have been named Gujarat (Gurjaratra) when it was uptill their advent known as Lata”<sup>47</sup>. But the association of the name of Gujarat with the rule of the Chaulukyas does not appear to be well established. Literary evidence seems to make a distinction between the ruling family (*i.e.* the Chaulukyas) and the Gurjara-land over which they ruled. Mularaja is described in Somesvara’s *Kirtikaumudi* as one “who was chosen by the Fortune of the kingdom of the Gurjara king”—a statement which would be meaningless if the territory occupied by Mularaja was not associated with the Gurjaras before his accession. There is really no positive evidence to connect the Chaulukyas with the Gurjaras, nor is it easy to accept the arguments recently advanced in favour of the theory that the Chaulukyas were Sulikas or Sogdians coming to India from Central Asia<sup>48</sup>.

There is little doubt that Mularaja, the founder of the Chaulukya kingdom, was the son of a Chapotkata princess and (as the Vadnagar *prasasti*<sup>49</sup> of the reign of Kumara-

<sup>46</sup> Abul Fazl records this tradition (Jarrett, Vol. II, pp. 214 ff.).

<sup>47</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, XL, pp. 7-39.

<sup>48</sup> A. K. Majumdar, *Chaulukyas of Gujarat*, pp. 9-17.

<sup>49</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, I, pp. 296 ff.

paḥa, dated 1151 A.D., says) took captive "the fortune of the kingdom of the Chapotkata princes". Hemachandra calls him King of the Chaulukya-vamsa". In one of his inscriptions his father is called Raji and designated *Maharajadhiraja*<sup>51</sup>, but in Merutunga's chronicle he is described as a young pilgrim to Somnath who impressed the Chapotkata ruler by his skilful horsemanship. Whether Raji was a ruling prince cannot be ascertained. There is no reference either in epigraphic or in literary evidence to the paternal territory of Mularaja who specifically claims to have acquired the *Sarasvata-mandala* by the prowess of his own arms.<sup>52</sup> He may have been connected with a petty ruling family, but there is nothing on record to connect him with any foreign tribe.

The theory of foreign origin has found no place in regard to the Chandellas of Jeja-Bhukti. The story of the union between a young Brahmin widow named Hemavati and Chandrama (the Moon), resulting in the birth of a son named Chandravarman who established the Chandella kingdom, has rightly been dismissed by Vincent Smith as a "silly legend", although he has discovered in it an "implied admission that the pedigree of the clan required explanation, which was best attained by including it in the group of 'moon descended' Rajputs, and adding respectability by inventing a Brahman ancestress"<sup>53</sup>. The story is found in the *Mahoba Khand* which is usually treated as a part of the *Prithviraja Raso* attributed to Chand Bardai. No historical importance can be attached to this late work of uncertain authorship and date.<sup>54</sup>

Epigraphic evidence is hardly more helpful. The

<sup>50</sup> *Dvyasrayamahakavya*, I, 2.

<sup>51</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, VI, pp. 191 ff.

<sup>52</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, VI, p. 191.

<sup>53</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, XXXVII, pp. 136-137.

<sup>54</sup> See S. K. Mitra, *The Early Rulers of Khajuraho*, pp. 14-26.

tradition of the Chandellas' descent from the Moon is mentioned in the Khajuraho stone inscription of Dhanga<sup>55</sup> (dated 954 A.D.). The genealogy begins with the creator of the universe, from whom arose Atri who begot *muni* Chandratreya. From him arose "princes who had the power to destroy or protect the whole earth." In this family was born *nripa* Nannuka, the first king of the Chandella dynasty. Variants of this genealogy are found in other inscriptions.<sup>56</sup> Even poetic imagination could not bridge satisfactorily the gulf between the creator of the universe and the first historical ruler of the Chandella dynasty. There is, however, one common point between epigraphic evidence and literary tradition: descent from the Moon is the basis of the story. But there is no attempt to connect the dynasty with any of the heroes of the well known Lunar dynasty glorified in Epic tradition.

The name of the dynasty is indicative of its traditional connection with the Moon. The earliest inscription of the dynasty (the Khajuraho stone inscription of Dhanga, dated 954 A.D.) gives the name 'Chandratreya'. In other inscriptions we find variants such as 'Chandrella', 'Chamdella', 'Chandella' and 'Chandela'.<sup>57</sup> Kielhorn thought that 'Chandratreya' was really a later Sanskritised form of 'Chandrella'. In any case the form 'Chandratreya' is practically unknown to literary tradition.

In the absence of positive epigraphic or literary evidence some European writers assumed that the Chandellas were in origin a non-Aryan clan intimately associated with the aboriginal Gonds and Bhars of Central India. Vincent Smith held that the Chandellas were originally Hinduised

<sup>55</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, I, pp. 122 ff.

<sup>56</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, I, pp. 140, 208-209, 217, 325.

<sup>57</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, XVIII, pp. 236-239. *Ep. Ind.*, II, p. 306; XX, p. 127.



Gonds<sup>58</sup>, but Russell thought that they sprang from the aboriginal Bhars.<sup>59</sup>

This distinction is immaterial. What is really important is the question of evidence on which the main conclusion—the aboriginal descent of the Chandellas—is based. It is on the whole obvious that the legends on which Vincent Smith and Russell relied cannot be treated as reasonably trustworthy evidence. The only more or less concrete factor is the doubt cast upon the respectability of the family by the story of Hemavati which, however, is unknown to epigraphic tradition. But this doubt can hardly be construed as an indication of the aboriginal origin of the family. Smith presumed that the Chandellas had no connection with the foreign immigrants from the north-west on the ground that they are not covered by the *Agnikula* story. But we have seen that the *Agnikula* story is no conclusive evidence of foreign descent. In any case we cannot draw the inference that dynasties outside the scope of that story must be of indigenous origin. If the Chandellas were really a clan of impure descent (as Smith suspected on the basis of the story of Hemavati), they might as well have derived their impurity from foreign descent. To say this is, of course, not to argue that they were Hinduised foreigners. The best course seems to be to leave the question open instead of accepting the Smith-Russell theory as the final word on the subject.

The inscriptions of the Gahadavalas are unusually modest so far as statements on the origin of the dynasty are concerned. There is no reference at all to its descent from the Sun<sup>60</sup> or the Moon or from any mythical sage or hero. There are references to its Kshatriya origin in several

<sup>58</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, XXXVII, pp. 136-137. JASB, XLVI, Part I, pp. 229-236.

<sup>59</sup> *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces*, Vol. IV, p. 441.

<sup>60</sup> See Rama Niyogi, *History of the Gahadavala Dynasty*, pp. 31-32.

inscriptions<sup>61</sup> and we are told that the dynasty came to power after the destruction of the Solar and Lunar dynasties<sup>62</sup>. The genealogy is traced to Yasovigraha who is described simply as "a noble (personage).....(who) by his plentiful splendour (was) as it were the sun incarnate"<sup>63</sup>.

Attempts have been made to treat the Gahadavalas as a mere sept of the Rashtrakutas instead of recognising them as a separate and independent clan<sup>64</sup>. Here the available evidence is altogether unconvincing<sup>65</sup>. Indeed, it might be said that there is really no evidence at all apart from the omission of the Gahadavalas in the lists of clans in the *Rajatarangini*, the *Kumarapalacharita* and the *Prithviraja Raso*. Such negative evidence proves nothing. There is no trace of the migration of the Gahadavalas from the South (*i.e.* the Rashtrakuta territories) to the North. This difficulty has been sought to be removed by references to the rule of "Princes born in the Rashtrakuta lineage" over Kanauj in the 11th century. There is, however, no reliable evidence of any dynastic connection between these princes and the Gahadavalas.

There is at least one inscription which mentions the two dynasties—the Gahadavalas and the Rashtrakutas—side by side without indicating that the former is a sept of the latter<sup>66</sup>. Moreover, in two of the lists of the 36 royal tribes compiled by Tod the Gahadavalas are mentioned as "a separate and single tribe". In spite of such recognition, however, Tod says that "the Gaharwar Rajput is scarcely known to his brothers in Rajasthan, who would not admit

<sup>61</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, IX, pp. 319-328; XIV, pp. 193-209.

<sup>62</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, XVIII, pp. 14-19.

<sup>63</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, XVIII, pp. 11-12.

<sup>64</sup> *Sir Asutosh Mookerjee Silver Jubilee Volumes* (Calcutta University), *Orientalia*, Part 2, pp. 259-261. *JRAS*, 1930, pp. 111-121. C. V. Vaidya, *History of Medieval Hindu India*, Vol. III, pp. 217-221. *Journal of Indian History*, XV, pp. 24-29.

<sup>65</sup> Tripathi, *History of Kanauj*, pp. 298-300. Roma Niyogi, *History of the Gahadavala Dynasty*, pp. 30-33.

<sup>66</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, IX, pp. 319-328.

his "contaminated blood to mix with theirs"<sup>67</sup>. Geographical distance might account for this exclusion of the Gahadavalas from the compact Rajput society of Rajputana, but there could hardly be any reference to their "contaminated blood" if they were known to be the descendants of the Rashtrakutas. The Paramaras were never treated as guilty of contamination on the ground of their connection with the Rashtrakutas.

The peculiar word "Gahadavala" has never been satisfactorily explained<sup>68</sup>. It occurs in the Gahadavala inscriptions very infrequently : indeed, only four references have been found. Nor did this dynastic designation secure recognition from the contemporaries of the Gahadavalas. We are told that "neither any of the numerous contemporary inscriptions of other dynasties nor any of the few literary works available, seem to have been acquainted with the name Gahadavala, though there are some stray and scanty references to Govindacandra and Jayaccandra in literature".<sup>69</sup>

This curious hesitation of the Gahadavalas to use their dynastic name in their own inscriptions is inexplicable unless we assume that it had some inglorious association of which Tod's reference to "contaminated blood" might be a faint echo. It is possible—though not certain—that the Gahadavalas were, during the initial stage of their rise to power, tributaries of the Ghaznavids. In that

<sup>67</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 98, 139. The Rathors intermarried with the Gahadavalas.

<sup>68</sup> The connection between Gahadavala and Gawarnad mentioned in a Kanarese inscription of Saka 994, suggested by Dr. R. C. Majumdar, is far-fetched (*Indian Historical Quarterly*, VII, p. 634). A local legend current in the Mirzapur district (U.P.) says that a mythical ancestor of the Gahadavalas overcame the malignant influence of Saturn and gained the title of "Grahavara" ("overcomer of the Planet") which was later on corrupted into "Gaharwar". (Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of N.W.P. and Oudh*, Vol. II, pp. 371-372. *Mirzapur Gazetteer*, p. 204). This explanation is obviously too fanciful for historical purposes.

<sup>69</sup> Roma Niyogi, *History of the Gahadavala Dynasty*, p. 36.



case they would naturally be looked down upon by the other Rajput clans which made no such humiliating compromise with the Turks. But this supposition does not explain the alleged contamination of blood.

Vincent Smith refers to an old Gorakhpur tradition according to which the Gaharwars are descendants of Raja Nala and migrated to Kasi from Nalapura or Narwar (near Gwalior).<sup>70</sup> Stories about some "Gahirawar" rulers of Kasi are found in the *Mahoba Khand* in connection with the legends about the origin of the Chandellas. The association with Kasi shows that the Gaharwar migrants from Central India as well as the "Gahirawars" were intended to be identified with the Gahadavalas, although the "Gahirawar" rulers mentioned in the *Mahoba Khand* are unknown to sober history. The story of Nala is a crude tradition connecting the Gahadavalas with the ancient Kshatriyas and it has some indirect support in the epigraphic claim to Kshatriya origin. The story of migration from Central India seems to be a faint indication of aboriginal origin which might explain Tod's reference to "contaminated blood". A local legend current among the present Gaharwars of U.P.<sup>71</sup> traces the Gahadavalas back to an obscure descendant of Yayati. This has been interpreted as a hint that "the Gahadavalas were originally an unimportant autochthonous tribe, who came into prominence as Kshatriyas only after seizing political power and championing the cause of Brahmanism"<sup>72</sup>.

The epigraphic records of the Kalachuris—a branch of the Haihayas—connect them with ancient Kshatriyas of Lunar origin. For example, an inscription of the Kalachuris of Gorakhpur begins the genealogy from Atri and carries

<sup>70</sup> JASB, 1881, p. 3.

<sup>71</sup> Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of N.W.P. and Oudh*, Vol. II, pp. 371-372. *Mirzapur Gazetteer*, p. 204.

<sup>72</sup> Tripaṭhi, *History of Kanauj*, p. 297.

it down through Haihaya and Kartavirya Arjuna to the founder of the family and his successors<sup>74</sup>. Another inscription of the same branch (but of a different family) carries the list upwards to Vishnu<sup>75</sup>. The inscriptions of the Kalachuris of Dahala also trace their descent to Vishnu, the immediate progenitor being "Haihaya-chakravarti" Kartavirya Arjuna. As the Kalachuris are connected in epigraphic tradition with the Narmada region<sup>76</sup> and as there is no bardic tradition connecting them either with foreigners or with aboriginal tribes, their claim to Kshatriya origin is less open to suspicion than similar claims of other clans.

Apart from the principal Rajput dynasties of the pre-Muslim period—those dynasties which succumbed to the Turkish invaders—we have to take notice of three ruling dynasties of medieval Rajputana: the Guhilots of Mewar, the Rathors of Marwar and the Kachhwas of Amber-Jaipur.

The Guhilots were among the oldest Rajput ruling dynasties though they did not attain political prominence during the golden age of Rajput ascendancy in Northern India. The problem of the origin of this celebrated dynasty has been discussed by several scholars from different points of view. In D. R. Bhandarkar's view the Guhilots were originally Nagar Brahmins, who were of foreign origin.<sup>76</sup> This theory has so far held the ground, although the orthodox theory of the Solar origin of the Guhilots still commands some support.<sup>77</sup>

Bhandarkar relied mainly upon epigraphic evidence<sup>78</sup>

<sup>74</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, VII, pp. 85-93.

<sup>75</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, XVIII, pp. 121-137.

<sup>76</sup> The Gorakhpur branch seems to have come from beyond the Narmada. See H. C. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. II, p. 743.

<sup>77</sup> *JASB*, 1909, pp. 167 ff.

<sup>78</sup> C. V. Vaidya, *History of Medieval Hindu India*, Vol. II, pp. 84, 332-337.

G. C. Raychaudhuri, *History of Mewar*, pp. 20-27.

<sup>79</sup> See *Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions of Kathiawar*.

and literary tradition. That Bappa was a Brahmin is indicated by certain verses in the Chitor and Achalesvara inscriptions (of 1274 A.D. and 1285 A.D. respectively) and also, more distinctly, by the Mamadeva *prasasti*. The Chitor inscription describes him as a Brahmin coming from Anandapura which Bhandarkar identified with Vadnagar on the basis of miscellaneous evidence such as the Vadnagar *prasasti* of the reign of Kumarapala, the Alina charters of 649 A.D. and 656 A.D., the tradition current among the Nagar Brahmins and popular stories. The well known work *Ekalinga-mahatmya*, composed during the reign of Rana Kumbha, refers to Guhadatta, the founder of the Guhila clan, as belonging to a Brahmin family emigrated from Anandapura. The same work tells us that Vijayaditya, the ancestor of Guhadatta, was the ornament of the Nagar race. These two statements show that the Guhilots were known in Rana Kumbha's reign as descendants of Nagar Brahmins. Moreover, the *gotra* of the Guhilots was *Vaijavapa* (as indicated in the *Ekalinga-mahatmya* and the *Rasikapriya*, a commentary by Rana Kumbha on Jaidev's *Gita-Govindam*) which was one of the *gotras* among the Nagar Brahmins at least as early as the 13th century.

The tradition of the Brahmin origin of the Rana's family is, indeed, as old as the Atpur inscription of 977 A.D. and can be traced up to the 16th and 17th centuries in Abul Fazl's *Ain-i-Akbari*<sup>79</sup> and Nainsi's *Khyat*. Against this continuous tradition is to be set the significant expression *Raghuvamsa-Kirtipisunah* in Naravahana's inscription of 971 A.D., showing that even before the date of the Atpur inscription the Guhilots had begun to advance the claim of Solar Kshatriya origin. Indeed, there

<sup>79</sup> Jarrett, Vol. II, p. 269. This point has not been noticed by Bhandarkar.

are conflicting traditions about the caste of the Guhilots—a fact noted by Nainsi in the 17th century—and Bhandarkar's identification of Anandapura with Vadnagar (on which the theory of foreign origin is largely based) raises some difficulties. Yet it would be difficult to assume an indigenous Kshatriya origin for the Guhilots in view of their historical association with the Gurjara-Pratiharas and geographical association with Rajputana.<sup>80</sup>

The chronicles of Marwar are unanimous in tracing the descent of the Rathor rulers of Marwar and Bikaner from the Gahadavalas of Kanauj<sup>81</sup>. This tradition has some support in epigraphic evidence. A late inscription, dated V. S. 1686, describes Siha, the founder of the Rathor dynasty of Marwar, as "Kanojiya-Rathoda"<sup>82</sup>. This description might, however, be an echo of the bardic tradition. That tradition had already taken shape, for the *Ain-i-Akbari* describes Siha as a nephew of Jayachandra<sup>83</sup>. In the Bithu inscription<sup>84</sup> Siha is described simply as "Rathoda" and there is no hint at all of any relationship between him and the Gahadavalas. It must be admitted, however, that the facts recorded in this inscription are quite consistent with the bardic story.

We must remember in this connection that the Rathors never called themselves Gahadavalas. Indeed, the practice of intermarriage between the Rathors and the Gahadavalas is a significant indication of the fact that the two clans are different in origin<sup>85</sup>. The *gotras* of the two clans are different, but this is no positive indication of

<sup>80</sup> The tradition connecting the Guhilots with the South (mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari* and the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*) is very late.

<sup>81</sup> *Sir Asutosh Mookerjee Silver Jubilee Volumes* (Calcutta University), Vol. III, Orientalia, Part 2, pp. 259-261. Ren, *Glories of Marwar and the Glorious Rathors*, pp. ix-x, 34, 38-47.

<sup>82</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, July, 1911, pp. 181-183.

<sup>83</sup> Blochmann and Jarrett, Vol. II, p. 191.

<sup>84</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, July, 1911.

<sup>85</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, XIV (1873).



difference in origin because it might be due to the adoption of a new priest after the arrival of Siha in Rajputana. In any case, even the acceptance of the bardic tradition cannot solve the problem of Rathor origin, for—as we have seen—the origin of the Gahadavalas cannot be precisely determined.

These difficulties have been sought to be removed by the theory that the Rathors were the descendants of the Rashtrakutas of Badaun<sup>86</sup>. The Rashtrakuta principality of Badaun was conquered by Qutb-ud-din in 1202 A.D., but princes of the dynasty probably continued to rule in Kanyakubja-*desa* for some years more<sup>87</sup>. Siha "Rathoda" might have been a descendant of this dynasty who migrated to Rajputana after its downfall. According to bardic tradition quoted by Tod and Reu, he came to Marwar in 1212 A.D. This date is chronologically consistent with the theory of Rashtrakuta origin; but if Siha died in 1273 A.D. (as bardic tradition, indirectly supported by the Bithu inscription, seems to indicate<sup>88</sup>), he must have been very young at the time of migration. In the Bithu inscription he is called simply "Rathoda" while his father Seta is called "kumara". Thus Seta seems to have been the son of a reigning prince, but not a reigning prince himself, and in the days of his son the family seems to have lost even the traditional glamour of royal descent. This is an adequate explanation of the gap of 70 years between the fall of the Rashtrakuta principality of Badaun and the death of Siha in Marwar. The alleged connection between Siha and Jayachchandra might have been a mistake "caused by the fact that 'Jayacandra' was at the time of Muslim attack actually the sovereign ruler of Kanauj and the

<sup>86</sup> There is no evidence to connect the Rathors with the Rashtrakutas of Hastikundi (in Rajputana).

<sup>87</sup> R. C. Majumdar (ed.), *The Struggle For Empire*, Vol. V, pp. 50-51.

<sup>88</sup> A. C. Banerjee, *Medieval Studies*, pp. 40-41.

overlord of the feudatory Rastrakuta family of that place"<sup>80</sup>.

Literary tradition connects the Kachhwas or Kachchwahas with the Solar Kshatriyas of Kosala. They are represented as descendants of Kusa, son of Rama, the hero of the Ramayana<sup>80</sup>. Linguistically there can be no derivation of the dynastic name from the name Kusa. Nor is there any really trustworthy evidence indicating any connection between the Kachhwas and the Kachchhapaghatas. Epigraphic records describe the founders of the different branches of the Kachchhapaghatas simply as *Kacchhapaghata-vamsatilaka* or *Kacchhapaghatanvaya*<sup>81</sup>.

Tod records the traditional connection of the Kachchwahas with Kusa, refers to the Kachhwa principalities of Narwar and Gwalior (but not to the principality of Dubkund) and says that Dhola Rai, "expelled the paternal abode.....laid the foundation of the state of Dhoondar" in 967 A.D.<sup>82</sup>. As the principality of Narwar seems to have been established in the last quarter of the 11th century<sup>83</sup>, Dhola Rai could hardly have been "expelled the paternal abode" before 967 A.D. "Sora Sing, prince of Nurwar", who was Dhola Rai's father according to Tod, is unknown to epigraphic records. Actually there is no conclusive evidence connecting the Kachhwas of Amber with the Kachchhapaghatas of Gwalior, Narwar or Dubkund except the nominal similarity in the names. Dhola Rai might well have been an adventurer of unknown origin who established a small principality in an aboriginal area by treachery. It is significant that the names of

<sup>80</sup> H. C. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. I, p. 552.

<sup>80</sup> *Archaeological Survey Reports*, I, pp. 56, 106-107, 161-162; III, pp. 1328 ff.

<sup>81</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, II, p. 237. *Indian Antiquary*, XV, p. 36. *Journal of American Oriental Society*, VI, p. 543.

<sup>82</sup> See *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. III, pp. 1328-1336.

<sup>83</sup> H. C. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, pp. 834-835.

Dhola Rai and his successors (Kankul, Maidul Rao, Hoondeo, Koontul, Pujoon, Malesi, Beejul, Rajdeo, Keelun, Joonsi) are not conventional Rajput names at all. If Tod's stories about the long contest between the early Kachhwa rulers and the Minas are accepted as an authentic account of the rise of the dynasty, the possibility of Dhola Rai's origin from aboriginal stock would perhaps be precluded. But there is no evidence at all of Kshatriya origin.

This brief survey of the problem of the origin of the principal Rajput dynasties would indicate that even scholarly discussions extending over several decades have not given us indisputable conclusions. We can hardly complain of paucity of sources; inscriptions, literary works in Sanskrit and Hindi and unwritten traditions handed down from generation to generation are available for critical study. The main difficulty lies in the fact that the evidence is in most cases more or less conventional and stereotyped; similar traditions find expression in different forms in different types of sources. This basic uniformity of the available information loses its historical significance to a large extent because it incorporates supernatural or obviously unhistorical elements. It is unlikely that the discovery of new inscriptions will improve our position, for epigraphic records usually conform to the traditional pattern. The inscriptions of the early medieval period are not objective historical narratives like the Allahabad *prasasti* of Harishena. What they reflect primarily is poetic fancy, supplemented by vague generalisations and stimulated by dynastic interest. We can hardly expect that the composer of any dynastic inscription left the beaten track and recorded the unvarnished truth. We must satisfy ourselves, in the present circumstances, with unsatisfactory conclusions.

## LECTURE II

### ASSIMILATION OF THE RAJPUTS

The history of the principal Rajput dynasties of the pre-Muslim period—those dynasties which succumbed to the Turkish invaders—has a striking feature. If some of these dynasties were of foreign origin, their religion, language, social affiliation and administration (as portrayed in literary and epigraphic evidence) betray no recognisable non-Indian element at all. If, again, some of them were of aboriginal or non-Aryan origin, the manner in which they lived and ruled did not reveal their ancestral socio-cultural legacy. The continuity with the past could hardly have been more complete and more remarkable if the uncontaminated descendants of the ancient Solar and Lunar dynasties had continued to rule without interruption in the sacred land of Aryavarta. The environment had triumphed over heredity to an extent almost unprecedented in history. The process of assimilation seems to have been completed even before the dynasties had seized political power, and as we proceed through their records—epigraphic and literary—we never feel that we are moving in a new world created by alien or unconventional forces. There might be foreign elements in the Hindu population of the “Rajput period”, but there were few recognisable foreign elements in the Hindu society and culture or in the Hindu political system on the eve of the Turkish conquest.

As we know, the outstanding fact in the religious history of Northern India in the post-Gupta period is the triumphant progress of the Brahmanical religion. Buddhism disappeared slowly from the land of its birth and Jainism



maintained its stronghold only in western India. The disappearance of Buddhism was really a case of merger ; the process was accelerated by the identification of the Buddha with Vishnu by means of the theory of incarnation. The similarity between the developed doctrines and rituals of Mahayana on the one hand and the Brahmanical stress upon faith and devotion and the worship of numerous gods and goddesses on the other hand contributed to the absorption of Buddhism by Brahmanical Hinduism. Jainism was not entirely unaffected by the assimilating capacity of Brahmanical Hinduism, but its "innate rigidity and conservative character ..... enabled it to maintain to a certain extent its special characteristics *vis-a-vis* Brahmanical religion"<sup>1</sup>.

• Buddhism played no part in the history of the Rajput dynasties, although its existence is noticed in inscriptions and in literary evidence here and there. There are scanty references to Buddhism in some inscriptions of the time of Mahendrapala.<sup>2</sup> In Krishna Misra's *Prabodha Chandrodaya* we have a reference to the flight of the Saugatas into Sindhu, Gandhara, Magadha, Andhra, Huna, Vanga, Kalinga and the land of the *mlecchas*. But the poet, a zealous devotee of Vaishnavism, is not an unprejudiced writer. His contempt for Buddhism found indirect expression through the following words of a Buddhist monk in the drama: "How excellent is the religion of the Saugatas which grants both sensual enjoyments and eternal felicity ; it permits us to inhabit elegant houses and to possess women obedient to our wills ; it removes the restriction as to the time of eating ; it allows us to recline on soft beds and to pass the shining moonlit nights in amours with

<sup>1</sup> R. C. Majumdar (ed.), *The Struggle For Empire*, p. 402.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoir of Archaeological Survey*, Vol. III, p. 124. *Memoir of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. V, p. 64.

young damsels"<sup>3</sup>. The Chandella rulers, however, do not appear to have shared the poet's hostile attitude towards the Buddhists. Some Buddhist images—sculptures of Bodhisatvas, Buddha and Tara—have been found at Mahoba, and expert opinion has assigned them to the 11th—12th centuries<sup>4</sup>. Much more significant is the fact that, while granting an entire village to some Brahmins, Paramardi took particular care to exclude a portion of it belonging to a Buddhist shrine<sup>5</sup>. These faint echoes of Buddhism undoubtedly indicate that it was not a living faith in the Chandella dominions; presumably it was too weak to provoke hostility.

In the Gangetic valley, however, Buddhism had retained some vitality. According to epigraphic evidence the Gahadavala Kings extended their patronage to the Buddhist monasteries at Set-Mahet<sup>6</sup> and Jayachchandra became a disciple of a Buddhist monk Srimitra "with a pleasing heart and an indescribable hankering"<sup>7</sup>. It is difficult to say whether this meant actual conversion to Buddhism or mere addition of a new god to the pantheon of gods generally worshipped by the Gahadavalas. It should be remembered that Buddha had already been accepted by the orthodox Hindu society as an incarnation of Vishnu. Jayachchandra's connection with Buddhism is indicated also by Ibn-ul-Athir's story about his white elephant which refused to salute Muhammad Ghorī after its capture on the death of the Gahadavala King.<sup>8</sup> The sanctity of the white elephant is a well known Buddhist tradi-

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<sup>3</sup> Taylor's translation, pp. 63, 34. A tenth-century inscription found in Mewar refers to a *guru* as "the thunderbolt to the mountains of pride of the Sugatas". (A. C. Banerjee, *Medieval Studies*, p. 34).

<sup>4</sup> *Memoirs*, Archaeological Survey of India, No. 8.

<sup>5</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, XX, p. 130.

<sup>6</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, XVII, pp. 61-64.

<sup>7</sup> *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1929, p. 26.

<sup>8</sup> Elliot and Dowson, Vol. II, p. 251.

tion. Whatever the nature and extent of the Gahadavala patronage might be, Buddhism was evidently in a state of decline. Srimitra, we are told, "restored the discipline and recovered many lost scriptures and others of the same kind, belonging to the illustrious site of Mahabodhi"<sup>9</sup>.

There is hardly any reference to Buddhism in the inscriptions and literary works of the other Rajput dynasties. In the case of the Chaulukya dominions it has been surmised that "the lingering influence of Buddhism came to an end ..... by A.D. 1024" when the great Jain monk Vardhamana Suri and his disciple Jinesvara defeated the Chaityavasins in a debate held in the court of Durlabha<sup>10</sup>. This theory is based on the identification of the Chaityavasins with the Buddhists. R. G. Bhandarkar, however, described the Chaityavasins as a Jain sect. Moreover, there is really no evidence to show that Buddhism was so strong in Gujarat in the 11th century that leading Jain monks found it necessary to vanquish this rival creed in an open debate.

Jain temples and *gosthi* are mentioned in some inscriptions of the Gurjara-Pratihara period.<sup>11</sup> There is no reference to Jainism in the inscriptions of the Gahadavalas. In the Chandella dominions, however, Jainism seems to have been a living faith. The Digambara sect was probably predominant, for it is specifically referred to in Krishna Misra's *Prabodha-Chandrodaya*. The dramatist says that the Digambaras fled to Panchala, Malava, Abhira and to the sea coast. He also refers to disputes between the Jains and the Buddhists<sup>12</sup>. Much more important than the prejudiced statements of the poet are inscriptions

<sup>9</sup> *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1929, pp. 14-30.

<sup>10</sup> A. K. Majumdar, *Chaulukyas of Gujarat*, p. 310.

<sup>11</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, IV, p. 310. *Annual Report of Archaeological Survey*, 1908-9, p. 108.

<sup>12</sup> Taylor's translation, pp. 63, 36-37.

issued by Jain worshippers, some of whom claimed to be *kulamatyas* of Chandella Kings<sup>13</sup>. One Pahila, "a devotee of the lord of the Jinas", is said to have been "held in honour by Dhanga" and one Vasavachandra is described as *Maharajaguru*<sup>14</sup>. Devotion to Jainism seems to have been particularly strong in the mercantile community and it is probable that the wealthy *sresthins* provided the funds for the construction of beautiful Jain temples at Khajuraho and at other places in the Chandella dominions like Dudahi and Madanpur<sup>15</sup>.

In Malava and Rajputana, and specially in Gujarat, Jainism was a flourishing faith, thanks to the missionary activities of some well known saints as also to royal patronage. Two Jain teachers, Amitagati and Dhanesvara, lived in Malava during the reign of Vakpati-Munja. Bhoja had a favourite Jain associate named Prabhachandra, and we are told in the *Prabandhachintamani* that the influence of the poet Dhanapala attracted the great King towards Jainism. If Merutunga is to be believed, Bhoja summoned a religious assembly in which the representatives of different sects participated for discussion<sup>16</sup>. Dhara was the birthplace of the great Jain author Abhayadeva who was made "Suri" by Jinesvara in 1031 A.D. Naravarman, the Paramara King, was favourably disposed towards Jainism and held the Jain teacher Vallabha in great veneration. Vindhyavarman extended his patronage to Mahavira, who was well versed in Jain theology and grammar. After a temporary reaction against Jainism in the reign of Subhatavarman, the cause of the faith was advanced in Malava by Asadhara, a disciple of Mahavira. There was

<sup>13</sup> *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXX, pp. 183-185.

<sup>14</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, I, p. 136.

<sup>15</sup> *Archaeological Survey Reports*, II, p. 434; X, pp. 92, 96; XXI, p. 172.

<sup>16</sup> *Prabandhachintamani*, pp. 52, 63.



a flourishing Jain monastery in Ujjain in the 13th century<sup>17</sup>.

In Rajputana Jainism secured a fresh lease of life from the missionary activities of Haribhadra Suri of Chitor (8th century) and the great teachers of the Kharatara sect like Jinesvara, Jinavallabha, Jinachandra and Jinapati<sup>18</sup>. Some of the Chahamana Kings decorated Jain temples. Arnoraja donated a site for the construction of Jain temples for worship in accordance with Jinavallabha's teachings. He also patronised the Jain scholar Dharmaghosa Suri. Vigraharaja IV built a Jain *vihara* and prohibited the slaughter of animals on certain prescribed days. Somesvara granted a village to the Jain temple at Bijolia. Prithviraja III employed Jains in his service and honoured Jinapati Suri with a *jayapatra*.

In Gujarat the powerful and enlightened patronage of Kumarapala made Jainism the dominant faith. It has been suggested that his acceptance of Jainism may have had "a material object in view, the winning of the support of the powerful and wealthy Bania Corporations, who were predominantly Jain". The expenses of his numerous wars, we are told, "must have drained his treasury, and may have made him increasingly dependent for financial assistance on the Jain community, who appeared to have formed, then as now, the backbone of industry, commerce, and banking in Gujarat"<sup>19</sup>. This view has been criticised on the ground that "we cannot positively say that the rich community in Gujarat in Kumarapala's day was Jaina just as they are now"<sup>20</sup>. Whatever the causes of Kumarapala's leanings towards Jainism might be, there can hardly be

<sup>17</sup> D. C. Ganguly, *History of the Paramara Dynasty*, pp. 249-254.

<sup>18</sup> A Mewar inscription of the 10th century refers to a guru "who was the medicine for the disease of the *syadvad* (Jainism)". (A. C. Banerjee, *Medieval Studies*, p. 34).

<sup>19</sup> H. C. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. II, p. 997.

<sup>20</sup> A. K. Majumdar, *Chaulukyas of Gujarat*, p. 122.

any doubt that his views and measures provided a remarkable incentive to the spread of the faith in his extensive territories.

His successor, Ajayapala, is described by Merutunga as a persecutor of Jainism. Henceforth Jainism, deprived of the patronage of the ruling dynasty, flourished under the patronage of wealthy and influential merchant princes like Vastupala, Tejahpala and Jagadu. It is not a little curious to recall that Vastupala, who is said to have spent fabulous sums in charities and in the construction of temples, was well known to his contemporaries for his martial qualities. In Arisimha's *Sukritasankirtana* occurs the following significant statement: "Thy sword, illustrious Vastupala, beautiful in rising and brandishing, valiant in deed, defeated in the world that Sangramasimha"<sup>21</sup>. The doctrine of *ahimsa* emphasized by Jainism seems to have influenced social customs such as spread of vegetarianism, but it does not appear to have affected affairs of State. Neither Jain teaching nor the conduct of Jain rulers and ministers looked down upon martial qualities or fostered the policy of pacifism<sup>22</sup>.

In spite of the lingering traces of Buddhism and Jainism, the world of the Rajputs was really the world of the Brahmanical gods; devotion to the Hindu Pantheon was the predominant feature of religious life. The Gwalior inscription of Gurjara-Pratihara Bhoja describes Nagabhata II as a ruler "who, desirous of the great growth of virtuous acts enjoined in the Vedas, performed a series of religious ceremonies according to the custom of Kshatriya families"<sup>23</sup>. This reference to "virtuous acts enjoined in the Vedas" must be taken as a conventional formula, for

<sup>21</sup> VIII, 46.

<sup>22</sup> A. K. Majumdar, *Chaulukyas of Gujarat*, pp. 323-324.

<sup>23</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, XVIII, pp. 108, 112.

the Vedic religion had long ago been transformed into the Brahmanical religion. Among the early Gurjara-Pratiharas Vatsaraja was a Saiva and Nagabhata was a devotee of Bhagavati. Epigraphic as well as numismatic<sup>24</sup> evidence shows that Bhoja was a devotee of the Boar incarnation of Vishnu, although he is described also as a devotee of Bhagavati. Mahendrapala was a *Mahesvara* or devotee of Siva. Mahipala was a devotee of Bhagavati as well as of Surya. The veneration of the Brahmanical gods was apparently firmly established, and one remarkable feature of religious life was the absence of sectarian animosity.

The records of the other Rajput dynasties indicate the same features: predominance of the Brahmanical religion and the peaceful co-existence of the principal gods and goddesses. There are references in Chandella inscriptions to the royal protection of the "three Vedas" and to sacrifices "where terribly wielded sword was the ladle, where the oblation of clarified butter was made with streaming blood ....."<sup>25</sup>. But Saivism and Vaishnavism were the predominant cults. Kalanjar had ancient association with Nilakantha Siva. The ascendancy of Saivism began in the reign of Dhanga, and its continuance till the fall of the dynasty is proved by epigraphic as well as archaeological evidence. Some of the early rulers—for example, Yasovarman—were Vaishnavas. Krishna Misra, the author of *Prabodha-chandrodaya*, was a zealous devotee of Vaishnavism, although he preached the excellence of the Advaita system of philosophy. Apart from Siva and Vishnu, the worship of Ganesa, Kartikeya, Brahma and Surya was fairly well known in the Chandella dominions.

<sup>24</sup> Smith, *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum*, Vol. I, pp. 232-233, 241-242.

<sup>25</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, I, pp. 126, 129, 131, 135.

Although the Chahamanas had fairly close association with the Jains, their devotion to the Brahmanical gods was beyond question. Ajayaraja was a devotee of Siva; so was Arnoraja who, however, showed his leanings towards Vaishnavism by building a temple of Varaha at Pushkar and by extending his patronage to the Bhagavata teacher, Devabodha. Literary evidence—particularly the *Harakeli nataka*, shows that Vighraharaja IV was a worshipper of Siva. Somesvara's title *Pratapa-lankesvara*, implying a comparison between him and Ravana, may be taken as an indication of his devotion to Siva. It is somewhat surprising that Brahma, whose temple at Pushkar was unique in India, did not attract the devotional allegiance of the Chahamana rulers.

Having regard to the importance of Varanasi in the Gahadavala dominions it would be natural to expect that Saivism would be the principal creed of the dynasty. But the most highly venerated god was Vishnu. The Gahadavala seal represented a figure of Garuda, the mythological *vahana* of Vishnu. Chandra, the first ruler of the dynasty, was a devotee of Adi-Kesava<sup>26</sup>. Jayachchandra was initiated into the worship of Krishna by a priest described as *Vaishnavapujavidhiguru*<sup>27</sup>. In spite of his alleged predilection for Buddhism the last Gahadavala King was a Vaishnava and followed his predecessors in using the descriptive title *Parama-Mahesvara*. Here is a clear indication of the simultaneous acceptance of the Vaishnava and Saiva cults by the Gahadavalas. A curious attempt to harmonise Vaishnavism and Saivism is evident in an epigraphic statement that Hari, being commissioned by Hara to protect Varanasi, was born in the person of Govindachandra<sup>28</sup>. There are epigraphic indications of the wor-

<sup>26</sup> *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1949, p. 37.

<sup>27</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, IV, pp. 117-120.

<sup>28</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, IX, pp. 319-328.



ship of other gods, e.g. Surya, Vinayaka, Kumara. The traditional homage to the Vedas is not withheld.<sup>c</sup> The Rahan grant says that the Creator was born in the person of Chandra to restore the earth to the path of virtue when, after the fall of the dynasties of the Sun and the Moon, the voice of the Vedas was almost extinct.<sup>29</sup>

The Kalachuris were ardent devotees of Saivism. Epigraphic evidence indicates close association between Yuvaraja and Saiva ascetics like Prabhavasiva<sup>30</sup>. Yasah-Karna is said to have "reverenced the holy Bhimesvara"<sup>31</sup> with many ornaments<sup>32</sup>. An inscription records the foundation of a temple of Siva, with a *matha* and a hall of study, by the widowed queen of Gaya-Karna<sup>33</sup>. The blessings of Siva are invoked in an inscription of Jayasimha<sup>34</sup>. Indeed, Saivism was the predominant faith in the Kalachuri dominions, although there are epigraphic references to Vaishnavism and Buddhism.<sup>35</sup>

In Malava, where (as we have seen) Jainism was by no means dead, the Paramara rulers were devout Saivas. Donations for Saiva worship were made by great Kings like Vakpati-Munja and Bhoja. Ujjain had well known Saiva monasteries and an emigrant from Varanasi, Bhava Brihaspati by name, served as Superintendent of Saiva temples at Dhara.

The early Chaulukyas were Saivas, although they showed friendly respect and generosity towards the Jains. Jayasimha Siddharaja had as his religious preceptor the famous Saiva teacher of Dhara, Bhava Brihaspati, whom

<sup>29</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, XVIII, pp. 14-19.

<sup>30</sup> *Memoirs, Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 23, pp. 122-129.

<sup>31</sup> Identified with Bhimesvara *lingam* in the temple at Draksharama (Godavari district).

<sup>32</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, II, p. 4; XII, p. 213.

<sup>33</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, II, pp. 7-17.

<sup>34</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, XVIII, pp. 214-218.

<sup>35</sup> Mirashi, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. IV, pp. lxxiv, ci, clxi.

he had brought to Gujarat after defeating the Paramara King.\* The famous Sahasralinga lake constructed by him was surrounded by 1,008 small shrines, each containing a Siva *lingam*. Even Kumarapala is described in an inscription dated 1169 A.D. (issued obviously after his conversion to Jainism) as "the leader of the princes who worship Mahesvara". Hemachandra also notes his lingering leanings towards the Brahmanical religion. Indeed, it has been suggested that "like Harshavardhana, while not ceasing to be a Hindu, Kumarapala favoured and actively promoted the spread of another religion, in his case Jainism"<sup>36</sup>. His successor, Ajayapala, was a devout follower of the Brahmanical religion; later chroniclers depicted him as a persecutor of Jainism. Vaishnavism was not popular in the holy land of Dvaraka. Jayasimha Siddharaja is the only Chaulukya King who constructed a temple for Vishnu. The ancient temple of Somanatha symbolised the religious spirit of Gujarat and Saurashtra.

Ekalinga is the tutelary divinity of the Guhilots: hence Saivism may be regarded as the original religion of Mewar. The Ranas were the *Dewans*, or Vicegerents, of Siva. The temple of Ekalinga (near Udaipur) is the most important shrine of the Saivas in Mewar. When the Rana visited the temple he superseded the priest in his duties and performed the necessary ceremonies. This peculiar custom may not be entirely unconnected with the well-known tradition that the ancestors of the Ranas were Brahmins. References to the Siva cult are found in inscriptions from the tenth century onwards. There are also references to Vaishnavism which reached the highest stage of development in Mewar in the days of Rana Kumbha<sup>37</sup>.

It would be too much to expect that the composers of

<sup>36</sup> A. K. Majumdar, *Chaulukyas of Gujarat*, pp. 121, 315.

<sup>37</sup> See A. C. Banerjee, *Medieval Studies*, pp. 34-37.

conventional epigraphic records and literary works would take any notice of the religious faith and festivals of the common people outside the charmed circle of the royal courts and the glittering palaces of the *sresthins*. If the alleged non-Indian or non-Aryan origin of the Rajputs left any trace on popular religion, inscriptions and Sanskrit literary works do not offer us any glimpse into those unorthodox deviations. According to traditions current in the Mahoba region a tribal deity known as Maniya Deo (Devi) was the tutelary goddess of the Chandellas,<sup>38</sup> but she is altogether unknown to the inscriptions of the dynasty. Similar traditions may still be current in other regions in connection with other Rajput dynasties, but no systematic attempt has been made to explore their historical significance. Our judgment is based exclusively on records prepared by learned Brahmins and Jains, for whom the unorthodox survivals of an obscure past or the crude ceremonies of the common people deserved no recognition at all. The picture which they have left for us is one of complete assimilation: whatever the origin of the Rajput ruling dynasties might be, they had succumbed completely to the Brahmanical religion. Buddhism was dying; Jainism showed signs of a living faith in western India. But it was the Brahmanical religion in its Saiva and Vaishnava varieties which really shaped religious life.

Social organization in the Rajput States was based on the traditional Brahmanical principles as incorporated in the *Dharmasastras*. The caste system, well defined and consequently rigid, provided the steel frame which sustained the social structure. In Krishna Misra's *Prabodhachandrodaya* we find *mahamoha* (i.e. great illusion) questioning the propriety of distinction between human beings

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<sup>38</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, XXXVII, p. 137.

with similar physical features<sup>39</sup>. This may be interpreted to mean that, in the poet's opinion, it would be silly to challenge the basis of the caste system. It was the duty of the ruling power to act as the guardian of the existing social order. The Paramara Kings, Udayaditya and Naravarman, for example, declared that their swords were always ready to protect *varna* or caste<sup>40</sup>. Even Jain ruling authorities took this duty seriously. When Vastupala was appointed the governor of Cambay he stopped the promiscuous mingling of castes in shops where curd was sold<sup>41</sup>. The Chandellas were anxious not to violate *Dharma* in any way<sup>42</sup>. The reference in Chandella inscriptions<sup>43</sup> to *svavarna* marriage and selection of brides from illustrious families (*mahavamsa*) indicates that marriage within one's own caste or within a circle of high families was the general rule.

The Brahmins naturally occupied the highest place in the social hierarchy. A Chandella inscription tells us that a Brahmin donee "was ever ready to expound the Vedas, the Vedangas, Itihasa, the Puranas and Mimansa, and was devoted to *sat-karma*"<sup>44</sup>. The six-fold duties (*sat-karma*) mentioned here include: *yajana*, *yajana*, *adhyayana*, *adhyapana*, *dana* and *parigraha*. Gifts of land, dwellings, gold, grain and cows to learned Brahmins were regarded as meritorious acts of faith. References to such gifts are numerous in the inscriptions of different Rajput dynasties. Some grants of Kalachuri Karna claim that the world was deafened by the sound of the engraving of the copper plates which he granted to Brahmins<sup>45</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> Taylor's translation, p. 17.

<sup>40</sup> D. C. Ganguly, *History of the Paramara Dynasty*, p. 248.

<sup>41</sup> A. K. Majumdar, *Chaulukyas of Gujarat*, p. 334.

<sup>42</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, I, p. 126.

<sup>43</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, I, pp. 126, 144, 200.

<sup>44</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, XX, p. 128.

<sup>45</sup> Mirashi, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. IV, p. ci.



Although belonging to the priestly class, the Brahmins were not debarred from joining other professions. The Chandella inscriptions refer to the employment of Brahmins as *Senapati*, *Dharmadhikarin* and *Rauta*<sup>46</sup>. A Brahmin family supplied officers to the Chandella Kings for five generations<sup>47</sup>. Lakshmidhara, the well known 12th century compiler of *Dharmasastra* digests, recognises the doctrine of *apad-vritti*, i.e. the principle that in cases of extreme necessity a Brahmin may adopt the profession of any other caste. This might be a necessary recognition of the uncertain conditions prevailing in the Gahadavala dominions as a result of frequent Muslim invasions.

The existence of the Kshatriyas as a distinct caste may be deduced from epigraphic references. Curiously enough, these references are far less frequent than might be expected. For example, only two references have been found in the Chandella records<sup>48</sup>. It has been suggested that the growing importance of the *Kula* eclipsed the previous practice of mentioning the caste<sup>49</sup>. The clan system, which dominated the political and social systems of the Rajputs in the later medieval period, was probably casting its premature shadow over the 10th and 11th centuries.

The term *Kayastha* was used originally to indicate a class of officials engaged in writing State documents and in maintaining public accounts. Gradually these officials formed an occupational caste. Lakshmidhara does not recognise them as a caste, and although the term *Kayastha* occurs in some Gahadavala inscriptions, it is not clear whether it is an official designation or the name of a caste<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, XVII, p. 235; XXV, p. 207.

*Ep. Ind.*, I, p. 146.

<sup>47</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, I, pp. 207-214.

<sup>48</sup> N. Bose, *History of the Candellas*, p. 152.

<sup>49</sup> *Indian Culture*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, pp. 52-53.

<sup>50</sup> Roma Niyogi, *History of the Gahadavala Dynasty*, pp. 224-225.

Some Chandella records seem to indicate that the Kayasthas were recognised as a caste<sup>51</sup>. *Gauda kayastha vamsa* is referred to in some Chandella inscriptions of the 9th century.

It was obviously a Brahmin-ridden society over which the Rajput princes presided in their capacity of the defenders of the faith. Says Alberuni: "The Brahmans teach the Veda to the Kshatriyas. The latter learn it, but are not allowed to teach it, not even to a Brahman. The Vaisya and Sudra are not allowed to hear it, much less to pronounce and recite it. If such a thing can be proved against one of them, the Brahmans drag him before the magistrate, and he is punished by having his tongue cut off"<sup>52</sup>.

Such social tyranny was altogether inconsistent with the traditions of the earlier centuries, when the Brahmins were ready to welcome even foreigners to the Aryan fold and to recognise them as Brahmins or Kshatriyas on the basis of their occupation in their adopted country. But Hindu religion and society lost their customary "dynamic fluidity" and withdrew themselves into a narrow shell of intolerance under the protection of the Rajput ruling dynasties. The process of assimilation had reached its climax; the process of exclusion was in full progress. Old forms were scattered all over the land, but the old vitality was gone.

The same uncritical adherence to the past is evident in the sphere of political organization and administration. The Rajput State in the early medieval period had no distinctive form or machinery which differentiated it from the Hindu State of old, nor did the political speculations of the age (as embodied in the *Laghv-Arhamniti-sastra* of

<sup>51</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, XXIV, pp. 108-109; I, p. 333.

<sup>52</sup> Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, Vol. I, pp. 125-126.

Hemachandra, in the *Sukranitisara* attributed to Sukra-charya and in the works of Lakshmidhara) indicate any new approach. The ideas of kingship, for example, are largely based on the thought of the older writers. The divine origin of monarchy is accepted by Lakshmidhara, and in the *Sukranitisara* an analogy is drawn between the functions of the King and the attributes of the different gods<sup>53</sup>.

The old theory of the seven constituent elements (*angas*) of the State is referred to in a Chandella inscription<sup>54</sup>. According to the *Sukranitisara*, "the King is the head, the ministers are the eyes, ally the ears, treasury the mouth, army the mind, capital and *rashtra* are hands and feet"<sup>55</sup>. The head of the State was expected to play the role of the instrument of *Dharma* or the Sacred Law. In several Chandella inscriptions there are references to Kings who were "afraid to offend against the law"<sup>56</sup>, and the positive duty of adherence to *Dharma* is frequently emphasized<sup>57</sup>. It was the ruler's duty to force people of different castes to perform their traditional duties<sup>58</sup>. The divine element in the monarchy is hinted at by comparisons between the Chandella rulers and gods like Vishnu<sup>59</sup>. Some Chahamana inscriptions<sup>60</sup> as well as the *Prithvirajavijaya*<sup>61</sup> identify some princes of the dynasty with Vishnu or one of his incarnations. They were expected to protect the gods, the Brahmins and the holy places<sup>62</sup> and trans-

<sup>53</sup> R. C. Majumdar (ed.), *The Struggle For Empire*, pp. 269-274.

<sup>54</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, I, p. 198.

<sup>55</sup> I, 122-124.

<sup>56</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, I, pp. 126, 131-132. *Indian Antiquary*, XVI, p. 204.

<sup>57</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, I, p. 143; XX, p. 127. *Indian Antiquary*, XVI, pp. 203, 205; XX, p. 127.

<sup>58</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, I, pp. 198, 203.

<sup>59</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, I, pp. 219, 327. *Indian Antiquary*, XVIII, p. 238.

<sup>60</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, XIX, pp. 215-219; XLI, p. 19.

<sup>61</sup> I, 33; VIII, 10.

<sup>62</sup> *Lalitavigraharaja*.

gression of *Dharma* was considered to be the gate to hell<sup>63</sup>.

The Sacred Law, as interpreted by the Brahmins, might be regarded as imposing undefined but real restrictions on the autocracy of the King. It has also been argued that "another check on the autocratic tendencies of a ruler was supplied by the established usage that a ruler should consult his ministers on all important matters of policy, internal as well as external"<sup>64</sup>. No autocrat can rule without the help of ministers, and it goes without saying that capable ministers can influence the decisions of even the most capricious of masters. The fact that the epigraphic and literary records of the Rajput dynasties<sup>65</sup> make specific mention of some ministers by name might be taken as an indication of the important role which they played in the affairs of State. But they owed their office entirely to the grace of the King; they were neither the representatives of the people, nor did they belong—so far as we know—to a powerful baronial oligarchy like the "over-mighty subjects" of Lancastrian England. Like the Tudor ministers they were powerful only so long as their masters chose to utilise them as instruments of power. Ministerial influence never attained institutional solidarity.

The administrative structure conformed to the traditional pattern. There is naturally some variation in details; some difference in emphasis could hardly be avoided. But a student of Rajput administrative institutions would hardly find anything which he could not explain on the basis of the ancient works on polity and the epigraphic

<sup>63</sup> *Prithviraja-vijaya*, VIII, 741.

<sup>64</sup> D. Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, p. 194.

<sup>65</sup> Chahamanas: *Lalita-Vigraharaja*; *Kanhadade-prabandha*.

Chandellas: *Ep. Ind.*, I, p. 201.

Paramaras: *Prabandha-Chintamani*, p. 33.

Gahadavalas: Lakshmidhara's *Krityakalpataru*.

Chaulukyas: *Ep. Ind.*, IX, pp. 151-152; II, p. 437.



records of the Gupta period. The terms used for territorial divisions were *Vishaya*<sup>66</sup>, *Mandala*<sup>67</sup>, *Avastha*<sup>68</sup>, *Pattala*<sup>69</sup>, *Pathaka*<sup>70</sup>, etc. The designations of the officers are similarly old-fashioned, e.g. *Dharmalekhi*<sup>71</sup>, *Dandapasika*<sup>72</sup>, *Mahattama*<sup>73</sup>, *Mahasadhanika*<sup>74</sup>, *Mahapradhana*<sup>75</sup>. The revenue system reveals little change; the sources of the King's income are practically constant, and the only remarkable new levy noticed in the contemporary records is the *Turushka-danda* realised by the Gahadavalas.

Portions of some at least of the Rajput States were governed by feudatory princes whose relations with the King do not appear to have been well defined. The Gahadavalas had several feudatory princes under them and three different designations were used by these subordinate rulers: *Ranaka*, *Mahanayaka*, *Maharaja*<sup>76</sup>. The Chaulukyas had their feudatories<sup>77</sup>; so had the other Rajput dynasties. Indeed, the practice of government through feudatories was a normal feature of the political system of the ancient period, and it was hardly surprising that they should con-

<sup>66</sup> Chandellas: *Ep. Ind.*, XX, pp. 125-128.

Gahadavalas: *Ep. Ind.*, XIV, pp. 193 ff.

Paramaras: *Ep. Ind.*, XIX, p. 74.

Chaulukyas: *Indian Antiquary*, VI, p. 192.

<sup>67</sup> Chandellas: *Ep. Ind.*, XX, pp. 125-128.

Paramaras: *Progress Report of the Archaeological Survey, Western Circle*, 1921, p. 54.

Chaulukyas: *Ep. Ind.*, X, p. 76; *Indian Antiquary*, XLII, p. 258.

<sup>68</sup> S. K. Mitra, *Early Rulers of Khajuraho*, p. 163.

<sup>69</sup> Chandellas: *Bharat Kala Bhavan plates (Ep. Ind.)*, XXXI.

Gahadavalas: *Ep. Ind.*, IX, pp. 319-328.

Paramaras: D. C. Ganguly, *History of the Paramara Dynasty*, p. 244.

<sup>70</sup> Chaulukyas: *Ep. Ind.*, XXI, p. 172; *Indian Antiquary*, VI, p. 200.

Gahadavalas: Roma Niyogi, *History of the Gahadavala Dynasty*, pp. 156, 158.

<sup>71</sup> Chandellas: *Ep. Ind.*, XX, p. 131.

<sup>72</sup> Paramaras: D. C. Ganguly, *History of the Paramara Dynasty*, p. 244.

<sup>73</sup> Gahadavalas: *Indian Antiquary*, XVIII, pp. 19-20.

<sup>74</sup> Paramaras and Chaulukyas: A. K. Majumdar, *Chaulukyas of Gujarat*, p. 228.

<sup>75</sup> Chaulukyas: A. K. Majumdar, *Chaulukyas of Gujarat*, pp. 228-229.

<sup>76</sup> Roma Niyogi, *History of the Gahadavala Dynasty*, pp. 161-165.

<sup>77</sup> A. K. Majumdar, *Chaulukyas of Gujarat*, pp. 254-255.

tinue to play a similar political role even after the subversion of the old dynasties.

There is, however, one point of interest so far as our study of the Rajput States is concerned. Is it possible to discover in the scanty records relating to the feudatories of this period any trace of the clan system which became the basis of the Rajput political system<sup>78</sup> in the late medieval period? A statement in a Chahamana inscription<sup>79</sup> of 973 A.D. saying that various estates were held by the King and junior princes of the clan "fits in"—we are told—"with the type of Rajput clan-monarchies"<sup>80</sup>. That there is some superficial similarity cannot be denied, but a casual reference in a single inscription of a single dynasty can hardly be construed as a positive indication of a system which was a characteristic feature—at least at a later stage—of all Rajput States. It is quite possible that a more careful study of the epigraphic records of other dynasties might bring out confirmatory data, making it clear that the political implications of the clan system had developed before the Muslim conquest.

Another explanation might be considered in this connection. Was the clan system in its political aspect confined to the real homeland of the Rajputs, *i.e.*, Rajputana? The Chahamana inscription referred to above relates to the Chahamana territories in Rajputana. The division of the small Chahamana principality of Nadol for administrative purposes among members of the ruling family<sup>81</sup> might be due to the operation of the clan system. The story of the foundation of the principality of Jalor by a junior member of the ruling family of Nadol has some resemblance with the story of the foundation of Bikaner<sup>82</sup>.

<sup>78</sup> See Lecture V.

<sup>79</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, XLIII, p. 60.

<sup>80</sup> R. C. Majumdar (ed.), *The Struggle For Empire*, p. 277.

<sup>81</sup> D. Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, pp. 138, 202.

<sup>82</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, pp. 1123-1124.

We should also note in this connection the description of the so-called “*jagirdari* system” in the *Lekhapaddhati*. Although that description applies, properly speaking, to the Chaulukya territories, it should be remembered that large parts of Rajputana were at different times under Chaulukya rule. According to this “compilation of models of Government documents and specimens of official and other correspondence”, the ‘feudal’ chiefs<sup>83</sup> held their estates on condition of rendering military service, or of paying fixed annual sums, to the ruler<sup>84</sup>. But we do not know whether these chiefs were members of the ruler’s clan or outsiders who had earned the ruler’s favour. Until this crucial question is decided we cannot be sure whether the system described in the *Lekhapaddhati* was the early stage of the traditional Rajput clan system at all.

In conclusion we may make a passing reference to the assimilation of the Rajputs in the field of language and culture. They were as good patrons of Sanskrit as the Imperial Guptas, although their age could not produce a genius like Kalidasa. Rajasekhara, who proudly traces his poetic descent from Valmiki, was not only the court poet but also the *guru* (spiritual guide) or *upadhyaya* (preceptor) of Gurjara-Pratihara Mahendrapala. Krishna Misra enjoyed the patronage of Chandella Kirtivarman. Gahadavala Govindachandra patronised Lakshmidhara and Jayachchandra was the patron of Sriharsha, the author of *Naisadhacharita*, “the last masterpiece of industry and ingenuity that the *Mahakavya* can show”<sup>85</sup>. Somadeva, the author of *Lalita-Vigraharaja*, was the court poet of Chahamana Vigraharaja IV, and the Kashmir poet Jayanaka was patronised by Prithviraja III. Of the literary

<sup>83</sup> They were called *Ranaka* or *Bhokta*. As we have seen above, the term *Ranaka* is used in Gahadavala inscriptions to indicate a feudatory.

<sup>84</sup> *Lekhapaddhati* (Gaikwad Oriental Series), pp. 7, 9, 23.

<sup>85</sup> Das Gupta and De, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 325.

celebrities of the Chaulukya dominions Hemachandra and Merutunga deserve particular mention. Padmagupta was the court poet of Vakpati-Munja and Sindhuraja of Malava. Kalachuri Karna honoured Bilhana on his visit to Benares and extended his patronage to poets like Vallana, Nachiraja, Karpura and Vidyapati. His interest was not confined to Sanskrit ; it extended to Prakrit as well.

Ancient Indian tradition expected ruling princes not only to patronise learning and literature but also to be the direct worshippers of the goddess Sarasvati. *Kaviraja* Samudra Gupta had several successors among the Rajput princes. Paramara Bhoja occupies the foremost place in this regard. The Udaipur *prasasti* calls him *Kaviraja*<sup>86</sup>. A large number of works on different subjects—grammar, poetics, lexicography, architecture, philosophy, medicine, astronomy—are attributed to him. “It is true that all these works were probably largely written by the literary men living in his court : but a prince who had such wide sympathies and could inspire scholarship in so many varied fields of knowledge must ever remain a remarkable personality in the records of time”<sup>87</sup>. His predecessor, Vakpati-Munja, is described in the Udaipur *prasasti* as a ruler who “cultivated eloquence, high poetry and the art of reasoning” and “completely mastered the lore of the Sastras”<sup>88</sup>. To quote Padmagupta: “after Vikramaditya departed, after Satavahana went, divine Sarasvati found rest with this friend of poets”<sup>89</sup>. There are scattered references to verses attributed to Vakpati-Munja.

Chahamana Vighraharaja IV composed the drama known as *Harakeli* which, according to Kielhorn, is an “actual and undoubted proof.....that Hindu rulers of the

<sup>86</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, I, p. 235.

<sup>87</sup> H. C. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. II, p. 872.

<sup>88</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, I, pp. 235, 237.

<sup>89</sup> XI, 93.



past were eager to compete with Kalidasa and Bhavabhūti for poetical fame". Although Gahadavala Govindachandra was not an author, he assumed the rather unusual epithet *sarvavidya-vichara-vachaspati* which implied a claim (whether justified we do not know) to mastery in all branches of learning. Poetical talents were attributed to Chandella rulers like Vidyadhara and Paramardi, and at least one Chandella inscription includes proficiency in arts and poetic talents among the personal qualities of ruling princes<sup>90</sup>. The tradition of royal scholarship and literary efforts survived the Muslim conquest and Rana Kumbha of Mewar reminded his contemporaries of the legendary genius of Paramara Bhoja<sup>91</sup>.

The literature of the "Rajput period" was undoubtedly rich in variety, but it lacked in originality as also in real artistic beauty. The inscriptions of the period, composed usually in the conventional *kavya* style, may occasionally claim some literary excellence; but we look in vain for the simple directness of the Asokan records or the majestic manliness of the Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samudra Gupta. It is really an age of imitation, not of creation. Despite their physical virility the Rajputs could not dam the tide of intellectual decadence which had begun to rise in the post-Gupta period. Their *digvijaya* could not give India—even Northern India—political unity and a consolidated imperial structure, nor could their patronage bring a new vitality to the decaying literary culture of their predecessors.

<sup>90</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, XX, p. 127.

<sup>91</sup> H. B. Sarda, *Maharana Kumbha*, pp. 163-168.

### LECTURE III

## RESISTANCE TO INVASIONS

The absence of a vigorous imperial dynasty in India made it possible for the Great Kings of Persia to cut off a big slice of this country and to organize it as the richest satrapy of their vast empire. Alexander the Great followed the same track although the rise of the Nanda Empire had in the meanwhile changed the political situation in India. The victorious Nandas, with their seat of power far away from the north-west, did not realise the implications of Alexander's invasion and kept aloof from the invaders. Alexander's hasty retreat, followed by his premature death, created a situation which was fully exploited by the enterprising founder of the Maurya dynasty. He won back the north-west from the foreigners and integrated it with the rest of the country. Indeed, he extended the frontiers of India far beyond the Khyber Pass. The Greeks continued to live in India as dutiful subjects of the Maurya Empire, contributing to its richness and variety : no part of India was cut off and constituted into a Greek colony or an independent Greek State. No wonder Chandragupta's achievement left an enduring impression upon the country and several centuries later the poet of the *Mudra-rakshasa* paid a glowing tribute to the great liberator<sup>1</sup> :

"May King Chandragupta with his prosperous connections and servants long protect the earth—he is a kingly manifestation of that self-existent God, to whose task when He had assumed the form of the Boar fitted to grant protection, the earth, of yore, clung, amidst universal

<sup>1</sup> Act VII. Kale's edition, English translation, p. 100.

destruction, and on whose arms she now leans, being frightened by the Mlechchhas".

After the fall of the Maurya Empire north-west India once again lay open to invasion. There was neither an imperial dynasty nor a bold adventurer like the first Maurya to hurl the *Yavanas*, Sakas, Pahlavas and Kushans across the frontier. The Sungas faced the *Yavanas* only when they penetrated into the heart of India. It was a purely defensive policy on a limited scale. Like their Nanda predecessors, the Sunga rulers of eastern and central India apparently felt that their political responsibility did not extend to areas outside their own territories. The result was the establishment of successive *Yavana*, Saka, Pahlava and Kushan principalities in north-western and western India. Of these, the Kushan Empire was a heterogeneous State which transcended regional importance. It was as if the Persian satrapy of the pre-Alexandrian epoch had been resuscitated in a new and more extensive form.

The political amputation of India by the foreign rulers of the post-Maurya period had one redeeming feature. The absorption of the foreign rulers and settlers in the social and religious systems of India took the edge off that amputation. India conquered her conquerors and, although her political unity was irretrievably lost, the integrity of her society based on the prescriptions of the Dharmasastras and the precepts of indigenous faiths was maintained. There were religious differences, and foreigners were attracted to Buddhism as well as to Brahmanical Hinduism. But these differences never created an unbridgeable gulf and peaceful co-existence was the rule rather than the exception.

The Gupta Empire had a fundamental political weakness: it was never in effective control of the north-west.

The arms of Chandra Gupta II extinguished Saka rule in prosperous Saurashtra : but the authority of the foreign rulers described in Harishena's poetic inscription as *Daivaputra Shahi Shahanushahi Saka Murunda* remained undisturbed in the Punjab region, subject only to formal and ceremonial allegiance to the imperial ruler of Pataliputra. Kashmir, the Punjab, Rajputana and Sind remained practically outside the dominant political system in India.

Naturally the Guptas met the Huns only when they entered into the heart of India : there was no possibility of meeting them on the north-western frontier. The frontier of India had practically moved far to the east. As the decadent Gupta Empire fell by stages, new kingdoms arose and political disunity became the normal feature of India's history. The Huns cut off a slice for themselves. Their name created terror even in the 7th century and Banabhatta referred to the Hun menace in his well known epithet *Huna-harinakesari* applied to his patron's father. But the Huns—as well as the Gurjaras and allied tribes which most probably came to India along with the Huns—succumbed to the assimilative power of Indian religions and culture. There is hardly any doubt that successive waves of invaders and immigrants from Central Asia were merged into the Indian population within a comparatively brief period after their arrival. The social structure of the country was still strong enough to maintain its integrity through a liberal process of assimilation of alien elements.

The Arab invasion of Sind marked a change in two important respects. In the first place, the invaders did not come from Central Asia and the north-west proper was not their target. As the invasion came through the sea-route the western coast of India was the natural target. Secondly, the invaders belonged to a race and a faith which



could not be absorbed by Indian society, religion and culture. An alien element retaining its distinctive features was introduced permanently for the first time into the Indian population.

The rise of the first important Rajput ruling dynasty, i.e. the Gurjara-Pratiharas, practically coincided with the consolidation of Arab rule in Sind. Geography imposed on them the heavy obligation of defending Western India against the Arabs. Nagabhata I is said to have "crushed the large armies of the powerful *mlechchha* King, the destroyer of virtue"<sup>2</sup>. The "*mlechchha* King" was, of course, the Arab governor of Sind, probably Junaid, who is said to have carried his raids in the direction of Ujjain<sup>3</sup>. If we accept the view that Ujjain was the seat of Pratihara power at the early stage, it would be natural for Nagabhata to defend his territories. It has been suggested that in resisting the Arabs he carried his arms as far as Broach where an inscription of a Chahamana feudatory records a grant "in the reign of increasing victory of the illustrious Nagavaloka"<sup>4</sup>. Nagabhata II is said in the Gwalior *prasasti* to have made "forcible seizure" of territories in western and central India, including those of the Turushkas. "This has been interpreted to mean the capture of the earliest Moslem settlements in Western India"<sup>5</sup>. Such settlements might have existed in Gujarat or Saurashtra. There is, however, no evidence to show that either of the two Nagabhatas tried to enter the Arab sphere in Sind. What they tried to do was to set a limit to the conquests of the *mlechchhas*, not to liberate that part of India which had already fallen into their hands. Sind was too remote,

<sup>2</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, XVIII, pp. 107, 110-111.

<sup>3</sup> Al Biladuri says: "They made incursions against Uzain and they attacked Baharimad and burnt its suburbs. Junaid conquered Al Bailaman and Jurz". (Elliot and Dowson, Vol. I; p. 126).

<sup>4</sup> Tripathi, *History of Kanauj*, p. 228.

<sup>5</sup> Tripathi, *History of Kanauj*, p. 235.

cut off from Rajputana by the desert, and not approachable by the sea because the Gurjara-Pratiharas had no navy. Thus Sind became a part of the Arab world and its Indian neighbours sank into a policy of defence.

This defensive policy was continued by Mihira-Bhoja, who pushed his conquests as far as Saurashtra in the west and the Sutlej in the north-west but made no attempt—so far as we know—to dislodge the *mlechchhas* from Sind. His hostility towards the Arabs was confined apparently to resistance to their raids. The well known testimony of the Arab traveller Sulaiman may be quoted in this connection: "This king maintains numerous forces and no other Indian prince has so fine a cavalry. He is unfriendly to the Arabs, still he acknowledges that the king of the Arabs is the greatest of kings. Among the princes of India there is no greater foe of the Muhammadan faith than he. . . . . He has got riches and his camels and horses are numerous"<sup>6</sup>. In some inscriptions and coins of Bhoja the curious title *Adivaraha* is attributed to him. The significance of this title seems to be political rather than religious, for he was not primarily a worshipper of Vishnu and had special predilections for the worship of Bhagavati. The identification with the Boar incarnation of Vishnu was probably intended to emphasize his role as the defender of his territories against the flood of the *mlechchha* inroads. The Primeval Boar lifted the earth from the water of the flood: Bhoja saved his territories from the flood which had already submerged Sind. Obviously Sind was not covered by Bhoja's defensive exploits: the Rajput hero's role was a limited one.

The tradition of the hostility of the Gurjara-Pratiharas towards the Arabs took deep root and became a permanent

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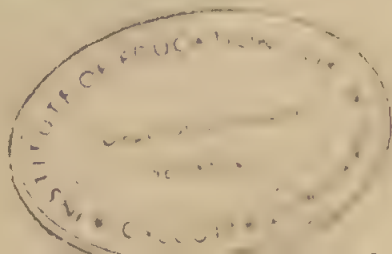
<sup>6</sup> Elliot and Dowson, Vol. I, p. 4.

feature of north Indian history in the 9th and 10th centuries. The Arab traveller Al Masudi wrote about "the Bauura, who is lord of the city of Kanauj": "He has large armies in garrisons on the north and on the south, on the east and on the west, for he is surrounded on all sides by warlike kings". Again: "The king has four armies according to the four quarters of the wind. Each of them numbers 700,000 or 900,000 men". Again: "The army of the north wars against the prince of Multan, and with the Mussalmans, his subjects, on the frontier. The army of the south fights against the Balhara, king of Manker. The other two armies march to meet enemies in every direction".

This formidable barrier against Arab aggression collapsed with the decline of the Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty. But the Arab power in Sind had declined in the meanwhile, and it was no longer capable of taking advantage of the weakness of the Indian defence system. The virtual separation of the Lower Indus valley from the rest of India was the enduring result of the Arab conquest. Towards the end of the tenth century the scene again shifted to the north-west and the Turks took the place of the Arabs. The establishment of the Yamini dynasty at Ghazni practically coincided with the dismemberment of the Gurjara-Pratihara Empire and the rise of the successor Rajput dynasties, on whom now fell the heavy task of defending the north-western frontier.

If the imperial Gurjara-Pratiharas could remain indifferent to the continuance of Arab rule in Sind, it was hardly to be expected that the less powerful Rajput dynasties which arose on the ruins of the empire of Bhoja and Mahendrapala would realise the sinister implications

<sup>1</sup> Elliot and Dowson, Vol. I, pp. 21-23.



of the fall of the Shahi kingdom which stood between the Gangetic valley and the new invaders. According to the *Rajatarangini*, the Shahi King was placed "between the rulers of the Darads and Turushkas as between a lion and a boar" and "resembled Aryavarta (as it lies) between the Himalaya and Vindhya (mountains)". In the days of Jaipal the Shahi kingdom "extended in length from Sirhind to Lamghan and in breadth from the kingdom of Kashmir to Multan". The establishment of the kingdom of Ghazni by Alptigin in the early sixties of the 10th century exposed the Shahis to Turkish invasions which resulted in the collapse of their authority in the days of Sultan Mahmud.

If Nizamuddin and Ferishta are to be believed, Jaipal "invoked help, and despatched letters seeking succour, to the various provinces of India imploring aid" against Sabuktigin and the rulers of Delhi, Ajmer, Kalanjar and Kanauj assisted him with men and money<sup>9</sup>. Proceeding on the assumption that this campaign of Sabuktigin took place in 990 A.D. or 991 A.D. Vincent Smith identified the ruler of Kalanjar with Dhanga, but he was not sure whether Rajyapal or Vijaypal was the ruler of Kanauj at the time<sup>11</sup>. A fragmentary inscription of a successor of Dhanga describes Dhanga as "a blessing for the earth..... who, by the strength of his arms equalled even the powerful Hamvira, who had proved a heavy burden for the earth"<sup>12</sup>. It is hardly possible to say definitely whether "the powerful Hamvira" is to be identified with Sabuktigin or with Sultan Mahmud. If the descriptive statement "who had proved a heavy burden for the earth" is to be

<sup>9</sup> Tr. Stein, Vol. I, pp. 205-206.

<sup>10</sup> Briggs, Ferishta, Vol. I, p. 15.

<sup>11</sup> Briggs, Ferishta, Vol. I, p. 18. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, tr. B. De, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> *JRAS*, 1909, Part I, pp. 275-276.

<sup>13</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, I, pp. 218, 221.



taken literally, it would apply to Sultan Mahmud (who had conquered the Punjab and raided the Gangetic valley) rather than to his father who had no direct contact with the interior of India<sup>13</sup>. Moreover, the verse is too vague to yield any concrete conclusion, apart from the plausible inference that there was no direct conflict between "the powerful Hamvira" and the Chandella ruler. It should also be noted that, although obliging *prasastikaras* attributed to Dhanga conquests in Andhra as well as political influence in Kuntala and Simhala (Ceylon),<sup>14</sup> there is no reference to his political connection with the Punjab or with the Shahis.

Apart from Ferishta's statement there is no evidence indicating the Gurjara-Pratihara ruler's participation in the contest between Sabauktigin and Jaipal. Delhi was an obscure town at the time : it was not considered worthy of mention in the works of Utbi and Alberuni in connection with Sultan Mahmud's campaigns, although Ferishta says that the ruler of Delhi tried to prevent the sack of Thaneshvar by Mahmud<sup>15</sup>. The Tomaras held Delhi till it fell to the Chahamanas in the 12th century. Sabuktigin's Tomara contemporary was probably Sallakshanapala, who is not known from any record to have joined Jaipal against the ruler of Ghazni. Ajmer was founded by the Chahamanas ruler Ajayaraja long after the invasion of Sabuktigin. Thus the ruler of Ajmer could not possibly have assisted Jaipal against the Turks.

It is practically certain that the story of a confederacy of North Indian princes against Sabuktigin was a later invention of uncritical Muslim chroniclers. Neither Utbi

<sup>13</sup> H. C. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. II, pp. 681-683.

<sup>14</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, I, p. 145.

<sup>15</sup> Briggs, *Ferishta*, Vol. I, pp. 62 ff.

nor Ibn ul-Athir mentions the so-called allies of the Shahi rulers. "It is curious that an author (Utbi) who was in such intimate relations with the Yaminis, and whose object in writing his *Kitab* was certainly not to conceal any facts which would tend to increase the glory of his master's house, should fail to mention these princes if their contingents were really present in the battle field."<sup>16</sup> The story appears for the first time in the *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, but Nizamuddin does not mention the names of the princes who sent aid to Jaipal. It is Ferishta who mentions specifically the rulers of Delhi, Ajmer, Kalanjar and Kanauj. Even this late writer does not say that any of these rulers took a direct part in the contest; they are said to have sent men and money. In view of the silence of Utbi and Ibn ul-Athir it is not possible to determine whether Nizamuddin and Ferishta found the story in any contemporary or semi-contemporary work. The reference to the rulers of Delhi and Ajmer naturally throws doubt on Ferishta's version.

The acceptance or rejection of the story of confederacy has some relevance to the general character of the Rajputs' resistance to Muslim invasions. We have seen that even the powerful Gurjara-Pratiharas did not take their imperial responsibilities quite seriously: they defended their own territories, but they did not think of liberating Sind. The Arab occupation of Sind was an offence to the faith which they adored and a standing menace to the security of their dominions. Yet they lacked in political foresight to such an extent that they never tried to do what Chandra Gupta Vikramaditya had done in regard to Saka rule in Western India. Even in the great age of success and splendour this imperial dynasty took a parochial view of its political role.

<sup>16</sup> H. C. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. I, p. 597.

Commenting on a verse of Manu Medhatithi, says: "Aryavarta was so called because the Aryas sprang up in it again and again. Even if it was overrun by the *mlechchhas*, they could never abide there for long"<sup>17</sup>. Sind was not only overrun by the *mlechchhas*; it became their permanent abode and served as their base of operations against Gujarat and Rajputana. But Bhoja Adivaraha and his successors made no attempt to reclaim that part of Aryavarta.

This parochialism steadily gained ground, partly because it was an infectious disease rooted in the Rajput clan system<sup>18</sup>, and partly because the successors of the Gurjara-Pratiharas had limited resources and limited ambitions. Although some of them (the Chandellas and the Kalachuris, for example) assumed traditional imperial titles no Rajput dynasty attained an imperial position after the decline of the Gurjara-Pratihara Empire. It would be going too far if we assume that the Rajput princes of the tenth century realised the gravity of the Turkish menace and offered their support to the Shahis in defending the north-west. It was more natural for them to look upon the crisis of the Shahi kingdom as a purely local affair and to pursue their own schemes of conquest nearer home.

At the time of Sabuktigin's death (997 A.D.) the eastern boundary of the principality of Ghazni had been extended practically to the Indus; not only the Khyber Pass but also the strategic outpost of Peshawar had been lost to the Shahi kingdom. The remaining territories of the Shahis were virtually indefensible against determined attack from the north-west. That determined attack came in the days of Sultan Mahmud. According to Utbi, he "made it obligatory on himself to undertake every year

<sup>17</sup> II, 22.

<sup>18</sup> See Lecture V.

an expedition to Hind".<sup>19</sup> The object of these annual expeditions seems to have been primarily political: Mahmud continued the policy of conquest which his father had initiated with preliminary success.

The brunt of Mahmud's attack naturally fell upon the Shahis, who still guarded India's north-western gate. Their power was broken by the year 1014 A.D. and the political pretensions of the dynasty came to an end with the death of Bhimpal in 1026 A.D. Meanwhile Mahmud had crushed Muslim resistance in Multan and opened the gate to the rich Gangetic valley. The capture of Bhatiya (identified with Bhatinda<sup>20</sup>) in 1004 A.D. and of Narayan (identified with Narayanpur in the former Alwar State of Rajputana) in 1009 A.D. must be viewed as significant steps in this direction. The plunder of Thaneswar and Mathura followed. The Rajput princes were now called upon to resist the invader who had made himself the effective ruler of the north-west.

Kanauj, the old citadel of North Indian imperialism, "a city which raised its head to the skies, and which in strength and beauty might boast of being unrivalled"<sup>21</sup>, was deserted in haste by the weak Gurjara-Pratihara ruler, Rajyapal, and its seven forts surrendered to the invader on a single day (1018 A.D.). No other Rajput ruler came forward to defend the imperial city, but after Mahmud's departure to Ghazni the Chandellas turned against the unfortunate Gurjara-Pratihara prince, "rebuking him for his flight and the surrender of his territories to the Mussalmans"<sup>22</sup>. A Chandella inscription tells us that

<sup>19</sup> This is the correct version according to Nazim, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, p. 86; he points out that Elliot and Dowson (Vol. II, p. 24) give a wrong translation attributing "a touch of religious fanaticism" to Mahmud's campaigns.

<sup>20</sup> Nazim, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, Appendix J.

<sup>21</sup> Briggs, *Ferishta*, Vol. I, p. 57.

<sup>22</sup> Ibn ul-Athir.



Vidyadhara<sup>23</sup> "caused the destruction of the King of Kanauj"<sup>24</sup>. Another inscription speaks of a Kachchhapa-ghata prince, a feudatory of the Chandellas, having "fiercely slain in a great battle the illustrious Rajyapala"<sup>25</sup>. It was a suicidal act of heroism on the part of the Chandellas. A modern writer describes Rajyapal as "the cowardly ruler of Kanauj" and speaks of his 'punishment'<sup>26</sup>. Another modern writer speaks of Vidyadhara's "bold and courageous stand"<sup>27</sup>. But the heroes who came forward to fight "great battles" against the "cowardly" successor of Mihira-Bhoja were not to be found near the field of battle when the Muslim invader plundered the holy cities of Thaneswar and Mathura and "gave orders that all the temples should be burnt with naphtha and fire and levelled with the ground".

After the fall of the last of the Imperial Gurjara-Pratiharas the task of defending Central India fell upon the Chandellas. The obscure Gurjara-Pratihara ruler was no longer "the chief of all the princes of India"<sup>28</sup> to whom "all submitted their necks in obedience". According to Ibn ul-Athir, "Bida (*i.e.* Vidyadhara), the accursed, . . . . was the greatest of the rulers of India in territory and had the largest armies". A contest between the new premier prince of central India and the invader from the north-west lay in the logic of history. The details of this contest have been discussed by several modern writers and need not detain us here. The significant point is that the Chandella inscriptions are silent on this contest, either because the *prasasti*-writers were unable to appreciate the true significance of the struggle or because they were not in a

<sup>23</sup> H. C. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. I, p. 606.

<sup>24</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, II, pp. 219, 222.

<sup>25</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, II, p. 237.

<sup>26</sup> Tripathi, *History of Kanauj*, p. 286.

<sup>27</sup> S. K. Mitra, *The Early Rulers of Khajuraho*, p. 75.

<sup>28</sup> This is Utbi's description.

position to claim victories for the Chandella hero. We have to depend on the accounts of the Muslim chroniclers even though they might have crossed the limits of historical accuracy in their zeal for the glorification of their faith.

Sultan Mahmud's first expedition against Vidyadhara (1022 A.D.) had no decisive result. According to the later chronicler Nizam-ud-din there was no fight at all, but Ibn ul-Athir speaks of a "vehement" battle. "Immense quantities of booty", we are told, "fell into the hands of the army of Islam" (Nizam-ud-din). In any case, there is little doubt that the Chandella ruler escaped practically unhurt. So Sultan Mahmud came again in 1022 A.D., but neither Gwalior nor Kalinjar could be stormed successfully. The result was a compromise on the principle of peaceful co-existence. The Chandella ruler composed verses in praise of the invader, who sent, in return, not only his congratulations but also a mandate conferring the command of 15 fortresses. And then, we are told, "the Sultan returned (to Ghazni) with victory and triumph". These statements of the Muslim chroniclers can hardly be construed into "a formal submission by the Chandella ruler"<sup>29</sup>.

Unable to penetrate into Central India by the stiffness of Chandella resistance, Sultan Mahmud turned his attention to the west. The result was the celebrated sack of Somnath (1026 A.D.). Here, again, no information is available from the indigenous sources; inscriptions as well as historical chronicles are silent on the destruction of the most celebrated shrine in western India. The accounts left by the Muslim chroniclers indicate that the capital of the Chaulukya kingdom, Anahilapataka, and another important town called Delavada were left undefended and the

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<sup>29</sup> S. K. Mitra, *The Early Rulers of Khajuraho*, pp. 82-83.

invading army marched through Gujarat and Saurashtra with adequate opportunities for replenishing its stores. Bhima I did not resist the invader till the destruction of Somnath was an accomplished fact. This might have been good strategy<sup>30</sup>, but it did not save Somnath. A ruler who invaded Sind, conquered Abu, fought with the Chahamanas of Naddula and played an important part in the downfall of Paramara Bhoja allowed an alien invader to pass unmolested across the entire length of his territory and failed even to cut off his retreat. There was no lack of heroism so far as the common man was concerned, for 50,000 men are said to have sacrificed their lives in defence of the temple even though the local commander escaped to a nearby island. It was bad and cowardly leadership which caused the disaster.

Fortunately for India, this was practically Sultan Mahmud's last expedition and death took him away four years later. The permanent annexation of the Punjab was the most enduring and significant result of his expeditions. Only three of the major Rajput dynasties were called upon to resist him. The Gurjara-Pratiharas, already exhausted by the process of internal decay and challenged by overmighty feudatories like the Chandellas, failed ignominiously to guard the security of the Gangetic valley. The Chandellas, still in possession of youthful vigour, strengthened by their control over great strongholds like Gwalior and Kalinjar, were a match for the invader. To them Central India owed its immunity from the fate which had befallen the Shahi kingdom. In Gujarat Sultan Mahmud had a limited objective, viz., plunder of the rich temple of Somnath. The Chaulukyas failed to stop his progress.

The impression which Sultan Mahmud's expeditions left even in the powerful Chandella kingdom was echoed

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<sup>30</sup> A. K. Majumdar, *Chaulukyas of Gujarat*, pp. 44-48.

in a fragmentary inscription found at Mahoba. Referring to the achievements of Dhanga it says that he "by the strength of his arms equalled even the powerful Hamvira, who had proved a heavy burden for the earth"<sup>31</sup>. Although the term "Hamvira" seems to have been to the Indians "the accepted title for a Muhammadan prince at least during the period c. 1000-1300 A.D.", chronological calculations seem to indicate that the "Hamvira" referred to in this inscription should be identified with Sultan Mahmud<sup>32</sup>. Moreover, as we have already pointed out<sup>33</sup>, it should apply to the conqueror of the Punjab and the invader of the Gangetic valley rather than to Sabuktigin whose conquest was confined to the far-off north-west. It was Sultan Mahmud who would appear to the Hindus of Central India as "a heavy burden for the earth".

Was it possible for the Rajput princes to lift this "heavy burden" and free the "earth" just as the founder of the Maurya dynasty had done? A modern writer says, "The inclusion of the Punjab and Afghanistan in the kingdom of Ghazni made the Islamic conquest of India a comparatively easy process. It was no longer a question of whether, but when, that mighty flood would overwhelm the country as a whole"<sup>34</sup>. Such a pessimistic estimate of historical possibilities might be justified in retrospect, but India's fate was not decided irrevocably by the annexation of the Punjab to the Yamini kingdom. Ahmed Shah Abdali had annexed the Punjab, Kashmir and Sind to the Afghan Empire created by him. The Sikhs—a numerically small community of unorganised warriors—were able, during the Misl period, to liberate the Punjab, and the process was carried to its logical conclusion by Ranjit Singh.

<sup>31</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, I, pp. 218, 221.

<sup>32</sup> H. C. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. II, pp. 681-683.

<sup>33</sup> See *ante*, p. 59.

<sup>34</sup> R. C. Majumdar (ed.), *The Struggle for Empire*, p. 22.



Was it altogether impossible for the Rajput princes to do the same thing in the 11th century? If the weakness of Ahmed Shāh Abdali's successors provided an opportunity for the Sikhs, the weakness of Sultan Mahmud's successors offered a political prize to the Rajput princes. Their failure to seize the prize was due to their lack of political vision ; it was not inherent in the political situation at the time of Sultan Mahmud's death.

In the Punjab the rule of the Yamini dynasty after the great conqueror's death was disturbed by internal dissensions in the royal family as well as in the local administrative hierarchy. Yet, Ahmed Niyaltigin, who governed the province for some years in Masud's reign, was able to raid the holy city of Benares, which was then included in the kingdom of the Kalachuri Gangeya (1034 A.D.)<sup>35</sup>. "Never", says a Muslim chronicler, "had a Muhammadan army reached this place before". What is equally remarkable is the fact that Niyaltigin's march along the left bank of the Ganges through the whole length of Upper India was not challenged. Gangeya, an ardent Saiva, who is said to have "conquered the world"<sup>36</sup>, imprisoned the ruler of far off Kira (in Kangra) and taken up his residence under the holy fig tree at Prayaga<sup>37</sup>, could not protect the sacred city of Siva against the troops of a governor of the Punjab. To say that it was a "surprise raid" and "the invaders knew full well what risk they would run if they stayed there longer" is hardly any justification for this patent failure<sup>38</sup>.

Ferishta tells us that in the reign of Maudud "the raja of Delhi, in conjunction with other rajas, retook Hansi, Thaneswar and their dependencies from the governors, to whom Maudud had entrusted them". They also

<sup>35</sup> Elliot and Dowson, Vol. II, pp. 123-124, 205.

<sup>36</sup> (*Jita-Visva*): *Ep. Ind.*, I, pp. 219, 222.

<sup>37</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, II, p. 4; XII, p. 211.

<sup>38</sup> Mirashi, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. IV, p. xci.

took the fort of Nagarkot<sup>39</sup>. The Raja of Delhi must have been a Tomara prince, probably Kumarapala (*circa* 1019-1049 A.D.). The "other rajas" cannot be identified. It has been said that there was "a confederacy under the leadership of the Raja of Delhi to put an end to the Muslim rule in the Punjab" and that "the Paramara Bhoja, the Kalachuri Karna, and the Chahamana Anahilla were probably among those who formed the confederacy"<sup>40</sup>. A reference in the Udaipur *prasasti* to Paramara Bhoja's victory over the Turushkas by means of his mercenaries has led to the "conjecture" that "Bhoja sent his troops to the assistance of the King of Delhi in his war against the Moslems"<sup>41</sup>. There is no evidence to connect the Kalachuri Lakshmi-Karna with the hostilities between the Tomaras and the Yaminis. The Chahamana Anahilla of Nadol fought with a "Turushka" who "might be either some general of (Sultan) Mahmud or Mahmud . . . . himself"<sup>42</sup>. The theory of a "confederacy" is hardly consistent with the known facts about Bhoja's protracted hostilities with the Kalachuris (Gangeya and Lakshmi-Karna) and his defeat at the hands of Anahilla<sup>43</sup>. If Ferishta's story has any authenticity we must conclude that it was a case of local resistance organized by the Hindu princes ruling over Delhi and its neighbourhood.

In the reign of Sultan Ibrahim his son Mahmud, who was in charge of the government of the Punjab, conquered Agra and Kanauj and penetrated into the Gangetic valley. So many elephants were collected by the invader that a stable was established at Kanauj and one Chand Rai was appointed to take charge of them<sup>44</sup>. It has been suggested

<sup>39</sup> Briggs, Vol. I, p. 118.

<sup>40</sup> R. C. Majumdar (ed.), *The Struggle for Empire*, p. 94.

<sup>41</sup> D. C. Ganguly, *History of the Paramara Dynasty*, pp. 100-101.

<sup>42</sup> D. Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, p. 126.

<sup>43</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, IX, p. 75.

<sup>44</sup> Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV, pp. 205, 523-524.

that this Chand Rai is to be identified with Chandra, the first Gahadavala ruler, who "forcibly occupied Kanauj and made himself the master of the country" after the departure of the Muslim army and continued to rule "on his promise to pay an annual tribute to the Sultan of Ghazni"<sup>45</sup>. This theory has been challenged on substantial grounds<sup>46</sup>. Chandra's contact with the Yamini dynasty, if any, is not indicated in the Gahadavala inscriptions. We are simply told that, when the earth became distressed after the death of the Paramara Bhoja and the Kalachuri Lakshmi-Karna, King Chandradeva acted as the saviour<sup>47</sup>. The use of full imperial titles in the earliest inscription of Chandra's reign<sup>48</sup> seems to be significant. Nor can we overlook the importance assigned to Kanauj in Gahadavala inscriptions, although there is no indication about the date and manner of its occupation by the first Gahadavala ruler.

Mahmud's expedition resulting in the temporary occupation of Kanauj was not confined to the Gangetic valley. He invaded Malwa, and in the words of the contemporary poet Salman, "Malwa trembled and fled" from him<sup>49</sup>. This poetic exaggeration does not indicate the real result of the expedition. If epigraphic evidence is to be believed, the Paramara ruler Lakshmadeva was successful in his resistance to the invaders although they won some initial victories<sup>50</sup>. Later history shows that Mahmud's invasion made no permanent impression on Malwa. Salman also refers to the investment of Kalinjar, but there is nothing in the Chandella records to show that the contemporary Chandella ruler, Kirtivarman, had to deal with the Turushkas.

<sup>45</sup> *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. IX, pp. 951 ff.

<sup>46</sup> Rama Niyogi, *History of the Gahadavala Dynasty*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>47</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XIV, pp. 101-104.

<sup>48</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, IX, pp. 302-305.

<sup>49</sup> Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV, p. 524.

<sup>50</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, II, p. 188.

The geographical situation of the Gahadavala kingdom made it a natural prey to the expansionist policy of the Yamini Sultans and their governors in the Punjab. During the reign of Masud III an officer named Hajib Tughatigin "crossed the river Ganges in order to carry on holy war in Hindustan and penetrated to places where, except Sultan Mahmud, no one had reached so far with an army before"<sup>51</sup>. According to the contemporary poet Salman, "the gallant army" of Masud "took Malhi, the God-forsaken chief of Hind; Kanauj was the capital of Hind which the infidels regarded as their polestar"<sup>52</sup>. This "Malhi" has been identified with the Gahadavala ruler Madanpal who, it has been said, escaped from captivity by paying a large ransom<sup>53</sup>. The occupation of Kanauj by the Muslim army seems to be proved by some Gahadavala inscriptions, and it is probable that the city was recovered by the valiant prince Govindachandra who is said to have "again and again by the play of his matchless fighting made the Hammira lay aside his enmity"<sup>54</sup>.

The fortunes of the Yaminiis declined during the first half of the 12th century and shortly after 1157 A.D. Ghazni was lost to them for ever. Henceforth Lahore became their capital. But the arms of Ghur were long enough to reach them there. Lahore fell to Muizuddin Muhammad in 1186 A.D.: the Yamini dynasty came to an inglorious end.

Epigraphic and literary evidence refers to contests between the Muslims and the greatest of the Gahadavala rulers, Govindachandra, but these references are too vague to give us a concrete picture. The undated Sarnath

<sup>51</sup> *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 107.

<sup>52</sup> Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV, p. 526.

<sup>53</sup> H. C. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. I, pp. 514-515.  
Roma Niyogi, *History of the Gahadavala Dynasty*, pp. 58-59.

<sup>54</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 14-19.



inscription of one of his queens says: "Hari, who had been commissioned by Hara in order to protect Varanasi from the wicked Turushka warrior, as the only one able to protect the earth, was again born from him, his name being renowned as Govindachandra"<sup>55</sup>. It is difficult to say whether this eulogy refers to "a possible invasion of Benares by the later Yaminiis"<sup>56</sup>. No Muslim chronicler refers to an advance as far as Benares during this period. The composer of the inscription might have drawn a contrast between the sack of the holy city in the days of the Kalachuri Gangeya and its immunity from *mlechchha* attack under the vigorous rule of Govindachandra. A more specific reference occurs in the *Kritya-kalpataru* of Lakshmidhara, where Govindachandra is described as one "who killed in battle the heroic Hammira"<sup>57</sup>. The identification of this "Hammira" must remain a historical puzzle. The statement might have been dismissed as a poetic tribute had it occurred in a conventional inscription, but Lakshmidhara occupied a high position in Govindachandra's court and could hardly have made an entirely baseless statement about his master's military success.

If epigraphic testimony is to be believed, Vijayachandra, son and successor of Govindachandra, "swept away the affliction of the world by streams (of water) flowing, as from the clouds, from the eyes of the wives of the Hammira, the abode of wanton destruction of the earth"<sup>58</sup>. It is difficult to take such conventional eulogies seriously. It is not altogether impossible that there is a veiled reference in this passage to a Muslim raid into Gahadavala dominions in the reign of the last Yamini Sultan, Khusrau Malik Taj-ud-daula. But no such raid is

<sup>55</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, IX, pp. 324, 327.

<sup>56</sup> H. C. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. I, p. 529.

<sup>57</sup> Ed. K. V. R. Ayanger, Introduction, p. 48.

<sup>58</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XV, pp. 7-9.

mentioned in the Muslim chronicles, and the Yamini ruler who succumbed to the rising power of Ghur was hardly in a position to threaten the Gahadavalas.

Geographical contiguity dragged the Chahamanas into hostilities with the Yaminis. Literary evidence<sup>59</sup>, which is admittedly late and therefore open to suspicion, attributes to Govindaraja III military success over Sultan Mahmud. Ferishta says that "Mahmud had to return to Ghazni by way of Sind, because the route through Marwar lay blocked by large forces under the ruler of Ajmer"<sup>60</sup>. As Ajmer was not in existence in Sultan Mahmud's time the authenticity of this statement is open to doubt, but it is possible that occasional skirmishes took place between Sultan Mahmud's troops and Chahamanas forces. But it was at the time of his successors that the Yamini-Chahamanas contest took a definite shape.

Durlabharaja III, says the *Prithvirajavijaya*, was killed in a battle with the *Matangas*<sup>61</sup>, a term which the commentator Jonaraja equates with the *mlechchhas*. If this equation is accepted as correct, the battle must have been fought against the Yamini forces from the Punjab and the contest may have taken place in Ibrahim's reign. The *Prithvirajavijaya* also refers to a contest between Ajayaraja and the *Garjana Matangas*<sup>62</sup> who should be identified with the Muslims of Ghazni. The contest seems to have centred round Nagor, which was probably seized from the Chahamanas by Bahlim, the rebellious governor of the Punjab in the reign of Bahram<sup>63</sup>. If Ajayaraja really secured the victory which is attributed to him in the *Prithvirajavijaya*, it might have been achieved after Bahlim's death against

<sup>59</sup> *Prabandhakosa* of Rajasekhara, p. 133.

<sup>60</sup> Briggs, Vol. I, p. 69.

<sup>61</sup> V. 70.

<sup>62</sup> V. 113. See also X. 40.

<sup>63</sup> Briggs, Ferishta, Vol. I, p. 151.

his successor Salar Hussain. In any case, the contest seems to have been continued in the reign of Arnoraja. According to the *Prithvirajavijaya*, the Turushkas came across *marusthali* and were defeated with great slaughter<sup>64</sup>. An inscription gives us a graphic description: "The land of Ajmer, soaked with the blood of the Turushkas, looked as if it had dressed itself in a dress of deep-red colour to celebrate the victory of her lord".

The capture of Delhi from the Tomaras by Vighraharaja IV brought the Chahamanas face to face with the Turushkas and increased their political responsibilities as the guardians of the "Delhi Gate". It is too much to say that "the conquest of Delhi turned the Chauhans . . . . into an all-India power" and that "their independence became identified with the independence of Aryavarta"<sup>65</sup>. The Tomaras were in possession of Delhi for several centuries without enjoying a position of all-India importance. But Dr. H. C. Ray rightly says, "The capture of Delhi and the land between the Jumna and the Sutlej made his dynasty the guardian of the gates to the Ganges-Jumna Valley, and as subsequent history shows, the Chahamanas had to bear the first shock of the revived Muslim power that was gradually issuing out from the hills of Ghur"<sup>66</sup>.

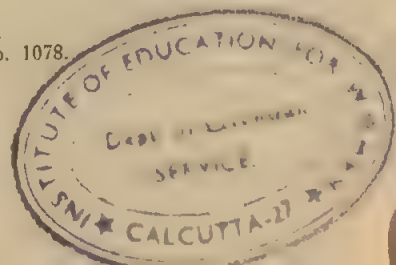
An inscription of Vighraharaja IV claims that he made Aryavarta "once more the abode of the Aryas" by exterminating the *mlechchhas*<sup>67</sup>. This was nothing but empty boast. Even the rapid and visible decline of the Yamini power in the reigns of Khusrau Shah and Khusrau Malik did not attract the Chahamanas to a real offensive against the *mlechchhas*. Epigraphic references to the successes of

<sup>64</sup> VI. 1-27.

<sup>65</sup> D. Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, p. 60.

<sup>66</sup> *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. II, p. 1078.

<sup>67</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XIX, pp. 215-219.



Vigraharaja IV against the Turushkas are vague and conventional. For example, Acts III-IV of *Lalita-Vigraharaja* give us a sketch of the King's impending "march against the king of the Turushkas". It is an unfinished story and it does not warrant the conclusion that "the *Hamnira* was beaten and forced to retire to his own dominions"<sup>68</sup>. Despite the rising power of the Chahamanas the Yaminis continued to rule in the Punjab.

So far we have dealt with the first two phases of the Muslim incursions, and in both cases the territorial gains of the invaders were confined to a border region. The Arabs were, on the whole, satisfied with the permanent occupation of Sind and the Yaminis kept themselves confined to the Punjab. There were innumerable raids and some of them (*e.g.* Niyaltigin's raid on Benares) were quite spectacular, but it may be doubted whether the Arabs and the Yaminis really wanted to occupy territories in the heart of India. Sind was an obscure outlying part of the Caliph's vast dominions: it was not seriously looked upon as a base for territorial expansion. The Punjab occupied a more or less similar position in the vast kingdom created by Sultan Mahmud. The rise of Ghur increased its relative importance and at the final stage Lahore became the political centre of the remnant of the Yamini kingdom. The Yaminis became Indian rulers without extra-territorial interests, but they were then too weak to look for territorial expansion inside India. The time was ripe for sustained efforts on the part of the Rajput dynasties—particularly the Gahadavalas and the Chahamanas whom territorial contiguity brought into close contact with the Turushkas—to liberate the Punjab from the rule of the alien princes lacking roots in the soil. Here the Rajputs

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<sup>68</sup> D. Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, p. 61.



failed in their great historic task. When the situation called for aggression against the Turushkas they remained steadfastly loyal to the weak policy of defence. Their territorial ambition was directed against their Hindu neighbours and their warlike zeal exhausted itself in mutual quarrels which contributed in the long run to the permanent success of the Turushkas in engulfing them all in common ruin.

The Yaminis were driven out of Ghazni in 1160 A.D. by the Ghuzz Turcomans who, in their turn, were driven out of the city by Ghiyasuddin Muhammad of Ghur. He made his brother Shihabuddin (or Muizuddin) governor of the province of Ghazni in 1173 A.D. The replacement of the effete Yaminis by a new and vigorous dynasty at Ghazni had far-reaching effects on the Indian situation.

Shihabuddin lost no time in emulating the example of Sultan Mahmud in the east. Instead of trying to dislodge the Yaminis from the Punjab he decided to seek his fortune in the flourishing Hindu kingdoms. He did not enter India through the Khyber Pass because the remnant of the Yamini kingdom stood between Ghazni and the fertile Gangetic plain. He chose the Gomal route, presumably with a view to advancing towards the fertile plains of Gujarat through the desert of Sind. His plan ignored Sultan Mahmud's bitter experience during the retreat from Somnath. But he was very successful at the initial stage. In 1175 A.D.—within two years of his installation at Ghazni—he captured Multan from the Qarmatian heretics and Uch from a Hindu prince.

With these two bases within the frontiers of India Shihabuddin invaded the Chaulukya kingdom of Gujarat. His defeat was complete: even the pious Minhaz admits that "the army of Islam was defeated and put to rout, and

the Sultan-i-Ghazni returned again without accomplishing his designs".<sup>69</sup> Both Nizamuddin<sup>70</sup> and Badauni<sup>71</sup> refer to his defeat and also to the great difficulty with which he returned to Ghazni. Inscriptions and chronicles of Gujarat speak proudly of the victory over *Garjanakadhiraja*<sup>72</sup>. There are some differences of opinion about the identity of the Chaulukya ruler who won this victory. It has been argued convincingly that the victor was Mularaja II (and not Bhima II as stated in the Muslim chronicles)<sup>73</sup>.

Shihabuddin treated this defeat as decisive and made a basic change in his plan. He decided upon a direct attack on the Yamini kingdom through the Khyber route. He captured Peshawar in 1178 A.D. Sialkot fell in 1185 A.D. Lahore was captured in 1186 A.D. and the Yamini dynasty came to an inglorious end. The master of the Punjab was now ready to descend upon the vast North Indian plain.

The Chahamana ruler of Ajmer and Delhi blocked his way. Literary legends are responsible for the glamour associated with the name of Prithviraj III. The *Prithvirajavijaya* treats him as an incarnation of Rama and the *Prithviraj Raso* assigns to him the role of a chivalrous hero. The impression which he created in the minds of his Muslim adversaries was reflected in the following statement in the *Taj-ul-Masir*: "From his large army and grandeur the desire of something like the conquest of the world had raised a phantom in the imagination"<sup>74</sup>.

According to the *Prithvirajavijaya*, he was "initiated

<sup>69</sup> Raverty, Vol. I, pp. 451-452.

<sup>70</sup> English translation, Vol. I, p. 36.

<sup>71</sup> English translation, Vol. I, p. 66.

<sup>72</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. VI, pp. 201, 205.

*Vasantavilasa* of Balachandra Suri, III, 34.

<sup>73</sup> A. K. Majumdar, *Chaulukyas of Gujarat*, pp. 132-133.

H. C. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. II, pp. 1003-1005.

<sup>74</sup> Elliot and Dowson, Vol. II, p. 214.

in the ceremony of destroying these devils in the shape of men"<sup>75</sup>, i.e. the Turushkas under Shihabuddin. As a matter of fact, however, he exhausted his resources in hostilities against his Hindu neighbours—the Chaulukyas, the Chandellas, the Gahadavalas—while the invader from Ghazni knocked at the gates of western India. He offered no assistance to the Chahamanas of Nadol and the Chaulukyas of Gujarat when Shihabuddin attacked them in 1178 A.D. Indeed, we are told in the *Prithvirajavijaya* that the minister Kadambavasa advised Prithviraj not to help the Chaulukya King against the Muslim invader<sup>76</sup>. The only act of heroism on the part of the Chahamana ruler at this stage was to dismiss an envoy from Shihabuddin. It is clear that he failed completely to realise the sinister implications of the aggressive policy of the new ruler of Ghazni.

After the fall of the Yamini dynasty "the Ghuri and the Chahamana stood face to face. The Muslim knew that the wealth of the chief cities and temples in the Jumna-Ganges valley and beyond could only be secured by the destruction of this Hindu power which held the key of the Delhi gate". We are in complete agreement with this statement of Dr. H. C. Ray, but we cannot accept the observation which follows: "The Chahamana knew, and expected no quarter"<sup>77</sup>. If late literary works like *Prithvirajaprabandha* and *Prabandhachintamani* are to be believed, the first battle of Tarain was preceded by several encounters between the Muslims and the Chahamana forces, but there is no evidence to show that the reality of the danger became clear to Prithviraj before the capture of Tabarhindah (usually identified with either Sarhind or

<sup>75</sup> X, 42.

<sup>76</sup> XI, 2-4.

<sup>77</sup> *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. II, p. 1086.

Bhatinda) by Shihabuddin. After the victory at Tarain Prithviraj allowed the Muslims to return safely to Ghazni and satisfied himself with the capture of Tabarhindah. Then, if the *Raso* story is to be believed, he wasted his time in the pleasant company of his newly married wife Samyogita. In any case, we have no literary or epigraphic material to indicate that he took into account the possibility of a fresh invasion and prepared himself to meet it. But in far off Ghazni Shihabuddin reorganized his forces, "having made sleep and rest unlawful to himself". In the second battle of Tarain Prithviraj succumbed to a surprise attack coloured by treachery. Lakshmidhara's comment on his leadership is not at all complementary: "He with his intellectual faculties clouded with the vice of sleep was killed in the engagement because he was (as good as) dead though alive"<sup>78</sup>.

The disastrous second battle of Tarain practically meant the collapse of the Chahamana kingdom, although Qutbuddin probably captured Ajmer sometime after 1194 A.D. Delhi fell immediately after Tarain. The conqueror lost no time in occupying the Gangetic valley. Jayachandra, the powerful Gahadavala ruler of Kanauj, was the next victim. Literary works ascribe to him numerous victories over Shihabuddin before the decisive battle of Chandwar<sup>79</sup>. The authenticity of these stories is open to doubt. Like his Chahamana rival, Jayachandra failed completely to realise the gravity of the new Turkish menace to the Hindu States of Northern India. According to the *Prithvirajprabandha*, the Gahadavala ruler had his capital illumined when he heard the news of the death of Prithviraj. In any case, with powerful military resour-

<sup>78</sup> *Viruddhavidhivdhvamsa*. As the author was a grandson of Prithviraj's minister Vamana his testimony seems to have some value.

<sup>79</sup> *Purushapariksha* (Bombay ed.), pp. 146-147. *Rambhajanarinataka* (Bombay ed.), p. 5.



ces at his command Jayachandra took no steps even after the fall of Delhi, as if the establishment of Muslim rule in the Delhi-Aligarh-Meerut region did not affect the Gahadavala territories at all. Instead of attacking the alien invader he waited to be attacked and paid the price in the battle of Chandwar. The victorious Muslim army advanced as far as Benares where "nearly 1000 temples were destroyed and mosques were raised on their foundations". The Gangetic valley was too large in extent, and too far from the invader's base of operations, to be occupied effectively within a few years. Remnants of Gahadavala rule continued for some time, but it was quite clear that the battle had been irretrievably lost.

The dissolution of the Chahamana and Gahadavala kingdoms was followed by attacks on the Chaulukyas and the Chandellas. The invasion of Gujarat by Qutbuddin was an offshoot of his attempt to suppress the rebellious Mers of the Ajmer region who were assisted, according to the *Taj-ul-Masir*, by "the immense army of Nahrwala". If the story told by Hasan Nizami is true, Bhima II, the contemporary Chaulukya ruler, had the political foresight to realise the significance of the establishment of Muslim rule at Ajmer. He was strong enough to keep the invaders away from his own territories. In 1197 A.D. the Muslims won a great victory, "nearly fifty thousand infidels were despatched to hell by the sword", and the capital city of Anhilwada was occupied<sup>80</sup>. But it was a Pyrrhic victory; the Muslim army of occupation left Gujarat sometime before 1201 A.D. when Bhima II was once more in possession of his capital. No light is thrown by the Muslim chroniclers on the circumstances necessitating this withdrawal. Nizami describes Gujarat as "a separate region of the world". Perhaps Qutbuddin found it too difficult to

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<sup>80</sup> Elliot and Dowson, Vol. II, pp. 226-231.

control this distant region. The Chandella territories, not far from Delhi, attracted his attention, particularly because Muslim control over those territories was essential to the consolidation of his master's hold on Northern India.

The Chandella ruler Paramardi, already weakened by the hostility of the Chahamana Prithviraj, failed to prevent the capture of Kalinjar by Qutbuddin in 1202 A.D. The fort was recovered by his successor Trailokyavarman, whom epigraphic evidence describes as *Kalanjaradhipati* and compares with "Vishnu in lifting up the earth immersed in the ocean formed by the streams of the Turushkas".<sup>81</sup> A Muslim attack on Kalinjar in 1233 A.D. is mentioned in the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*<sup>82</sup>. The Chandella princes continued to rule over a considerable portion of Baghelkhand till the end of the 13th century. An inscription dated 1309 A.D. mentions "Alayadina Sultana" as the reigning prince, indicating that Delhi's writ had begun to run in the former Chandella territories<sup>83</sup>.

The distance of the Kalachuri territories from the base of the Muslim invaders accounts for their immunity from the fate which befell the neighbouring Rajput principalities. Although Sultan Mahmud never threatened the Kalachuris the fame of Gangeya, the ruler of Dahala with his capital at Tiauri, was not unknown to Al Biruni. As we have already seen, the holy city of Benares, "belonging to the territory of Gang", was raided by the Yamini commander Niyaltigin in 1034 A.D. The dynasty declined slowly without going through the bitter experience of hostile contact with the Muslim invaders. The Bundelkhand region was probably subjugated by the Sultanate of Delhi in the reign of Nasiruddin Mahmud : there is an epigra-

<sup>81</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, I, pp. 327, 329.

<sup>82</sup> Raverty, Vol. I, pp. 732-733.

<sup>83</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, XVI, p. 11.

phic reference to the "Sakendra Suratrana Mahamūda" of Yoginipura, *i.e.* Delhi, dated 1328 A.D.<sup>84</sup> But the Kalachuris may have survived as a minor power in the virtually inaccessible parts of Gondwana even after the formal establishment of Delhi's suzerainty in Central India.

Apart from the invasion of Malwa in the reign of Lakshmadeva by the army of the Yamini Sultan Ibrahim, the Paramara territories enjoyed immunity from Turkish inroads till the days of Iltutmish. In 1234 A.D., when Devapala sat on the throne of Bhoja, the Sultan "led the hosts of Islam towards Malwa", captured Bhilsa and Ujjain and destroyed the great temple of Mahakala<sup>85</sup>. But it was only a raid, and it was followed by similar raids in 1292-1294 A.D. under the adventurous leadership of Alauddin Khalji. The final blow fell in 1305 A.D. Alauddin's well known general, Ain-ul-Mulk Multani, reduced the cities of Ujjain, Mandu, Dhara and Chanderi. This meant the extinction of the Paramara Kingdom. Alauddin was no longer satisfied with plunder; what he wanted was the consolidation of his power in Malwa as a prelude to his bid for the conquest of the South.

A few years before the fall of the Paramara kingdom its bitter and persistent rival, the kingdom of Gujarat, had succumbed to Alauddin's conquering zeal. The Chaulukyas had repulsed Shihabuddin himself in 1178 A.D. and compelled Qutbuddin to retreat after his initial success in 1197 A.D. There are some doubtful references to Muslim raids in Gujarat in the 12th century<sup>86</sup>, but this "separate region of the world" (to quote Hasan Nizami once again) lay outside the broad stream of Indian history during the period of the consolidation of Turkish rule in Northern

<sup>84</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, XII, pp. 44-47.

<sup>85</sup> *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, tr. Raverty, Vol. I, pp. 622-623.

<sup>86</sup> A. K. Majumdar, *Chaulukyas of Gujarat*, pp. 156-160, 183-184.

India. As in the case of Malwa, so in the case of Gujarat, it was the adventurous policy of Alauddin Khalji which led to permanent conquest. Attracted by the wealth of Gujarat and the commercial potentialities of the western ports he sent a large army in 1299 A.D. under the leadership of Ulugh Khan and Nasrat Khan. The ruling Vaghela prince Karna fled to the South after "a hard struggle"<sup>87</sup>. Gujarat became a province of the Sultanate of Delhi.

The second battle of Tarain and the battle of Chandwar may be regarded as two of the really decisive battles in the history of the world, for the victory of the Turushkas decided the fate of India for all time to come. Sind under Muslim rule had virtually cut itself off from the rest of India. The Punjab under Muslim rule might have done the same, leaving the Aravalli-Siwalik line (guarded by Delhi) as India's strategic frontier on the north-west. But the fall of the Chahamana power broke this line and brought the Turushkas to Rajputana. The fall of the Gahadavalas brought them to the heart of Northern India. There was no longer any geographical barrier between the Muslim territories and the Hindu principalities of the North, nor were the Rajput rulers of these principalities—the Chandellas, the Kalachuris, the Paramaras—capable of defending themselves against the invaders. In North India Hinduism in its political aspect had no chance of survival after Tarain and Chandwar. If the Paramaras and the Chaulukyas (the Vaghela branch) survived till the end of the 13th century it was because the Sultanate of Delhi was too busy with its internal problems and external dangers. The prey was ready : it was for the hunter to decide when he would jump.

The fall of the great Rajput kingdoms did not mean

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<sup>87</sup> *Zafar-ul-Walid*, quoted in *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. II, p. 1045.



the total extinction of Rajput independence. The Aravalis and the western desert provided a safe shelter for the small Rajput principalities which wanted to escape the Turkish yoke. Of these the oldest and the most important was the Guhilot principality of Mewar. It served as a link between the glorious age of the Gurjara-Pratiharas and the decadent—from the standpoint of the Hindus—age of the Turks. Here the Rajput spirit of resistance to alien rule and faith found a congenial home. No wonder Mewar was steadfast in its refusal to submit to Delhi from the days of Alauddin Khalji to those of Akbar. No wonder Mewar took a desperate stand against Aurangzib even though it enjoyed, under the terms of its treaty with Jahangir, exceptional privileges denied to other Rajput States. It is true that Mewar's localised resistance to the lords of Delhi did not influence the course of Indian history. But such resistance has an emotional significance which even sober history cannot afford to overlook. Tod's stirring words still deserve to be quoted:

"What nation on earth would have maintained the semblance of civilization, the spirit or the custom of their forefathers, during so many centuries of overwhelming depression but one of such singular character as the Rajput?..... Rajasthan exhibits the sole example in the history of mankind of a people withstanding every outrage barbarity can inflict, or human nature sustain, from a foe whose religion commands annihilation, and bent to the earth, yet rising buoyant from the pressure, and making calamity a whetstone to courage..... Mewar alone, the sacred bulwark of religion, never compromised her honour for her safety..... the blood of her princes has flowed in copious streams for the maintenance of this honour, religion, and independence".<sup>88</sup>

<sup>88</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 303.

## LECTURE IV

### THE RAJPUTS AND THE MUGHALS

The story of the foundation of the Mughal Empire in India is very closely connected with the most tragic incident in the history of Mewar and of Rajputana, viz. the collapse of Rana Sanga in the battle of Khanua. To the Rajputs the great Rana was known as *Hindupat*, and in Babur's memoirs he is described as a "pagan" fighting against "Islam-guarded soldiers". Among the Hindu princes of India Babur places him next only to the ruler of Vijaynagar and says that "not one of all the exalted sovereigns of this wide realm, such as the Sultan of Delhi, the Sultan of Gujarat and the Sultan of Mandu, could cope with this evil-dispositioned one, without the help of other pagans : one and all they cajoled him and temporized with him".<sup>1</sup>

This estimate of the Rana's power and influence is not exaggerated. He had twice defeated the troops of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi of Delhi and snatched away from his hands important places like Biyana. He had defeated the Gujarati troops more than once and plundered a large portion of Gujarat with impunity. He had helped Bahadur Shah to occupy the throne of Gujarat. So far as Malwa is concerned, Sanga's victories were still more brilliant and fruitful. He had captured Sultan Mahmud Khalji and retained his son as a hostage. Babur says that "in the downfall from power of the Mandu Sultans, he became possessed of many of their dependencies such as Rantanbur, Sarangpur, Bhilsa and Chandiri"<sup>2</sup>. Within Rajputana

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<sup>1</sup> See Beveridge, pp. 483, 550, 558, 561-562.

<sup>2</sup> Beveridge, p. 483.

Sanga's ascendancy was almost complete. Tod says, "The princes of Marwar and Ambar did him homage, and the Raos of Gwalior, Ajmer, Sikri, Raisin, Kalpee, Chanderi, Boondi, Gagraun, Rampura and Abu served him as tributaries or held of him in chief"<sup>3</sup>.

Such a ruler was eminently fit for restoring Hindu supremacy in Northern India. The moment was appropriate; the Sultanate of Delhi was tottering to its fall. Nor did Sanga lack in the patience and determination which are essential for success in such a dazzling but difficult enterprise. Since his accession he had been deliberately trying to strengthen his position by weakening his formidable neighbours, the Muslim rulers of Malwa and Gujarat. He had succeeded in a trial of strength with Ibrahim Lodi himself. After the battle of Panipat he felt that the moment, for which he had been waiting so long, had come at last. The successful Mughal invader was threatened by powerful Afghan chiefs in Eastern and Northern India, and his position was still further weakened by the anxiety of his lieutenants to leave India<sup>4</sup>.

Sanga did not hesitate to strike boldly, but he failed<sup>5</sup>. Khanua decided his fate. But although the Mughal victory was decisive Babur did not consider it prudent to provoke the Rajputs to a fresh contest. He gave up the "plan" of "moving into the pagan's country ..... because of the little water and much heat on the road"<sup>6</sup>. He contented himself with the capture of Chanderi<sup>7</sup>. Apparently

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<sup>3</sup> It is difficult to verify this statement, but Babur's list of Hindu chiefs killed at Khanua includes Chandrabhan Chauhan, Bhupat Rao of Chanderi, Manik Chauhan, Dilpat Rao, Gangu Singh, Karam Singh and Daukusi, each of whom was "a splendid and magnificent chieftain". (Beveridge, p. 573).

<sup>4</sup> Beveridge, pp. 523-525.

<sup>5</sup> For causes of his failure see: A. C. Banerjee, *Medieval Studies*, pp. 63-65; G. N. Sharma, *Malwa and the Mughal Emperors*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>6</sup> Beveridge, p. 577.

<sup>7</sup> Beveridge, p. 597.

his interest was concentrated on the consolidation of his new territories. To keep the Rajputs immobilised—at least for the time being—was his primary objective after the battle of Panipat, and it was well fulfilled by his victory at Khanua.

For about 90 years— from the fateful battle of Khanua to the submission of Mewar to Mughal suzerainty the Rajputs were on the defensive against the Mughals. So far as Mewar was concerned, the period started with internal tragedies and ended in a surrender which was, more or less, as honourable a political compromise as was possible in the prevailing circumstances. The great Rana Sanga himself was murdered by his own followers because he wanted to renew hostilities against Babur (1528). It is surprising indeed that the gallant heroes of Mewar should be so tired of fighting after a single defeat. Apparently Babur's victory had made a deep impression on them and they considered it unwise to continue the struggle. With Sanga's death political vision and idealism disappeared from Mewar. His successor Ratan Singh declared boastfully that "the gates of Chitor should never be closed as its portals were Delhi and Mandu"<sup>8</sup>, but his attempt to recover Ranthambhor from his step-mother Karmeti led her to open secret negotiations with Babur<sup>9</sup> and opened up dangerous possibilities of Mughal intervention in Mewar's affairs. The dispute over Ranthambhor culminated in the murder of Ratan Singh (1531) and the succession of Karmeti's son Vikramaditya. Exasperated by the young Rana's insolence some members of the "feudal" aristocracy appealed to Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. When the Sultan's army threatened Chitor, Karmeti appealed to Humayun, sending him a *rakhi* as a symbol of sisterly

<sup>8</sup> G. N. Sharma, *Mewar and the Mughal Emperors*, p. 46.

<sup>9</sup> Beveridge, pp. 612-613.



affection ; but Babur's indolent son only advanced as far as Gwalior and then returned to Agra. He did not come to Mewar's rescue even during the second siege of Chitor by Bahadur Shah, who had in the meanwhile challenged Mughal authority. Thus thrice after Sanga's death the Mughal rulers got unsolicited opportunities of intervening in the affairs of Mewar. On all these occasions—fortunately for the Rajputs—they ignored these opportunities. Babur was pre-occupied with other problems, but Humayun's non-interference was based on religious scruples, viz., reluctance to help an infidel against a co-religionist. "Humayun probably never realised the advantages that he threw away by not proceeding immediately to the aid of the Rajputs ; for he might have, if he had chosen, earned their permanent gratitude by timely aid"<sup>10</sup>. Humayun did not possess Akbar's political sagacity and foresight ; he could not think of utilising the Rajputs as an instrument of imperial policy.

The two sieges of Chitor by Bahadur Shah were followed by the murder of Vikramaditya by the rebellious "feudal" aristocracy, the brief reign of the usurper Banbir and the final recognition of Udai Singh as Mewar's legitimate ruler. During these years the Mughals were immobilised, so far as Rajputana was concerned, by their struggle with Sher Shah. Udai Singh had to face an invasion of the new Afghan ruler of Delhi, who occupied a part of Mewar after his contest with Maldev of Jodhpur but considered it unwise to besiege Chitor. Ferishta<sup>11</sup> refers to Udai Singh's treaty with Sher Shah.

According to Tod, Udai Singh "abandoned Cheetore" after the capture of the fort by Akbar and built a "small palace" at the site where the capital city of Udaipur grew

<sup>10</sup> S. K. Banerjee, *Humayun*, p. 118.

<sup>11</sup> Persian text, p. 228.

up later<sup>12</sup>. It appears, however, that the foundations of the new capital were laid several years before the fall of Chitor into Mughal hands and that Udai Singh was guided in this matter by a positive defensive policy. He wanted to concentrate his authority in "a mountainous district..... well protected by natural ramparts"<sup>13</sup>. Bahadur Shah's success had fully demonstrated the vulnerability of the supposedly impregnable fort of Chitor. If Udai Singh really took that lesson to heart and sought an alternative to traditional dependence on Chitor, Tod did him a cruel injustice in portraying him as a prince who had sacrificed his "country's honour and welfare"<sup>14</sup>. Taking his cue from Tod, V. A. Smith condemned Udai Singh as a "craven" prince and observed that he "shamelessly abandoned the post of honour and hid himself in distant forests"<sup>15</sup>.

The advent of Mughal imperialism in Rajputāna was marked by the voluntary submission to Akbar of the Kachhwa ruling family of Amber in 1562. Tod says, "Baharmull was the first prince of Amber who paid homage to the Mahommedan power". But he is not correct in saying that Bihari Mal "attended the fortunes of Baber, and received from Hemayoon (previous to the Pathan usurpation) the *munsuf* of five thousand as Raja of Amber". As a matter of fact, it was in the reign of Akbar that Bihari Mal became a vassal of the Mughal Empire. In 1561 he was invited to Akbar's court through Majnun Khan, *Jagirdar* of Narnaul. He met Akbar at Deosa (mid-way between Agra and Ajmer) and offered his eldest daughter in marriage to the Emperor. Tod is not correct in saying that "the name of Bhagwandas is execrated as the first who sullied Rajpoot purity by matrimonial alliance

<sup>12</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 383-384.

<sup>13</sup> G. N. Sharma, *Mewar and the Mughal Emperors*, pp. 63-64.

<sup>14</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 384.

<sup>15</sup> *Akbar*, Indian edition, pp. 61-62, 105.

with the Islamite". However, the marriage between Akbar and Bihari Mal's daughter was celebrated soon afterwards at Sambhar and she subsequently became the mother of Jahangir<sup>16</sup>. According to the *Ambara-Raja-Vamsavali*<sup>17</sup>, internal dissensions in Amber led the rival parties to bid for Mughal support and were partly responsible for the marriage<sup>18</sup>.

V. A. Smith says that "the marriage with the Amber princess secured the powerful support of her family throughout the reign (of Akbar), and offered a proof manifest to all the world that Akbar had decided to be the Padshah of his whole people—Hindus as well as Mahomedans"<sup>19</sup>. But the Kachhwas were not in a position in 1562 to offer "powerful support" to the expanding Mughal Empire. On the other hand, political and military weakness compelled them to seek its protection. They were feudatories of Marwar till the beginning of the 16th century and their territory was treated as a dependency of Ajmer. It was the powerful patronage of the Mughal Empire from which they derived strength and prestige. A modern writer records his appreciation of Bihari Mal's "rather un-Rajput virtues of prudence and self-preservation"<sup>20</sup>. Loyalty to the Mughals was the basis of Amber's prominence.

The conquest of Nagor and Ajmer, followed by the conquest of Merta (1652) and the submission of Amber (1562), exposed Rajputana to Akbar's expansionist policy. Mewar was naturally to be given priority—for historical and geographical reasons—over the desert principalities of Marwar, Bikaner and Jaisalmer. Chitor was, therefore,

<sup>16</sup> Tod, *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. III, p. 1337. Blochman, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, pp. 347-348.

<sup>17</sup> Jaipur manuscript.

<sup>18</sup> Bihari Mal was harassed by the Muslim ruler of Mewar.

<sup>19</sup> *Akbar*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>20</sup> Saran, *Provincial Government of the Mughals*, p. 142.

Akbar's first victim. The fort fell on February 25, 1568. Chitor was incorporated as a *Sarkar* in the Mughal Empire and placed in charge of a Muslim officer.

Apparently it was Akbar's intention to organize the Chitor region as a base of operations<sup>21</sup> before undertaking the conquest of the other parts of Mewar. Consolidation of Mughal military power in Rajputana demanded control over the well known forts on which the Rajput States relied for security. After the fall of Chitor Akbar's attention was directed towards Ranthambhor which lay within the Hada State of Bundi. By the middle of the 16th century the Hadas had virtually shaken off their allegiance to Mewar, although they continued to offer (says Tod) "the homage and occasional service on emergencies which are maintained as much from kinship as vassalage". Akbar besieged the fort of Ranthambhor in 1569 and secured its surrender—through the intercession of his Kachhwa relatives—in 1570 from the Hada ruler Rao Surjan. According to Tod, Akbar recognized the special position of the rulers of Bundi through a treaty which provided as follows<sup>22</sup>:

"1st. That the chiefs of Boondi should be exempted from that custom, degrading to a Rajpoot, of sending a *dola*<sup>23</sup> to the royal harem.

2nd. Exemption from the *jezeya*, or poll tax.

3rd. That the chiefs of Boondi should not be compelled to cross the Attoc.

4th. That the vassals of Boondi should be exempted from the obligation of sending their wives or female rela-

<sup>21</sup> According to the *Ain-i-Akbari* (Jarett, Vol. II, pp. 109, 278-279), the *Sarkar* of Chitor consisted of 26 *mahals* and yielded 30,047,649 *dams*.

<sup>22</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. III, pp. 1480-1482. Saran (*Provincial Government of the Mughals*, p. 140) says that the terms "as given by Tod are obviously a later fabrication". But he admits that the Hada chiefs "enjoyed a more honourable and independent position in the empire than the otherwise more important states of Amber and Jodhpur, and perhaps more than all others except Mewar".

<sup>23</sup> "*Dola* is the term for a princess affianced to the king" (Tod).



tives 'to hold a stall in the Meena Bazaar' at the palace, on the festival of Noroza.

5th. That they should have the privilege of entering the *Dewan-aum*, or 'hall of audience', completely armed.

6th. That their sacred edifices should be respected.

7th. That they should never be placed under the command of a Hindu leader.

8th. That their horses should not be branded with the imperial *dagh*.

9th. That they should be allowed to beat their *nakarras*, or 'kettle-drums', in the streets of the capital, as far as the *lal durwaza*, or 'red-gate': and that they should not be commanded to make the 'prostration',<sup>24</sup> on entering the Presence.

10th. That Boondi should be to the Haras what Delhi was to the king, who should guarantee them from any change of capital".

After the fall of Ranthambhor and the comparative consolidation of Mughal authority in the Chitor region Akbar turned once more towards Mewar, where the death of Udai Singh and disputes about succession<sup>25</sup> had prepared the ground for fresh intervention. Tod's famous description of Rana Pratap Singh's position at the time of his accession is hardly an exaggeration: "Pertap succeeded to the titles and renown of an illustrious house, but without a capital, without resources, his kindred and clans dispirited by reverses....."<sup>26</sup> Akbar was fully aware of the young Rana's weakness and in view of his previous experience in Amber and Bundi, he hoped he would be able to

<sup>24</sup> According to the *Akbar Nama* (Vol. II, pp. 494, 495), the Rao of Bundi performed the 'prostration' (*sijdah*).

<sup>25</sup> Udai Singh died on February 28, 1572. His second son Sakti Singh was already enjoying an allowance from Akbar. Pratap's claim to succession was contested by his younger step-brother Jagmal who, on his failure in Mewar, secured Jahazpur as a Mughal *jagir*.

<sup>26</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 385.

win him over through soft diplomacy. During the second half of the year 1573 he sent three missions led by Man Singh, Bhagwan Das and Todar Mal, all of whom failed to persuade Pratap Singh to submit to Mughal suzerainty. The result was a full Mughal invasion of Mewar, culminating in the celebrated battle of Haldighati (June 21, 1576), described in Tod's immortal work as the "Thermopylae of Mewar"<sup>27</sup>. Mewar was now exposed to Mughal penetration. Hostilities continued till 1585. Then the Mughals relaxed their grip on Mewar, and before his death on January 19, 1597, Pratap Singh was able to re-establish his control over all important outposts in Mewar except Chitor and Mandalgarh.

It is possible to take two different views of Rana Pratap Singh's heroic struggle against the Mughals. The first view was popularised by Tod's eloquent appreciation of "undaunted heroism, inflexible fortitude, that which 'keeps honour bright', perseverance" and the determination that "his country should not be abandoned to the Toork"<sup>28</sup>. The other view attaches greater importance to the perspective of Indian history in the 16th century and represents Rana Pratap's struggle as a desperate resistance—destined to eventual failure—against the unifying forces released by the liberal and tolerant Mughal imperialism of the days of Akbar. To quote the latest writer on the history of Mewar:

"Great as he was, one might speculate whether the struggle tended to contribute to the welfare of the country as a whole or produced adverse effect on the future of the land. It is to be admitted as Akbar was a great and benevolent sovereign who pursued the grand policy of unifying the country both politically and culturally. Pratap's

<sup>27</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 407.

<sup>28</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 406.

remaining aloof from the union was a great impediment in that noble task. To that extent it was injurious to the interest of his country. If at this stage Pratap would have joined the Mughal order he could have saved his country from disaster and ruin. Even his long resistance could not avert the days when during his own son's time Mewar became a subordinate state of the Mughal empire. Had this opportunity been given to Mewar earlier much of its backwardness could have been mended"<sup>29</sup>.

Speaking from the purely political and military points of view Rana Pratap Singh's policy must be condemned as basically unrealistic. He committed himself and his State to uncompromising resistance to overwhelmingly superior resources, and there was at no stage any reasonable prospect of enduring success. The final act of submission was delayed only by the vicissitudes of Mughal policy. It was preceded by terrible suffering on the part of the people, and what is more regrettable, the permanent liquidation of Mewar's pre-eminence in Rajputana. Marwar and Amber—the latter an upstart favourite of the Padshahi Court—became the leading States of Rajasthan, and Bappa's kingdom paid for its resistance to Mughal imperialism by quietly sinking down to the status of a second-rate principality. Never again did Mewar recover the place which it had held in the Rajput States system before the advent of the Mughals.

Even then it must be admitted that Tod's sentimental eulogy carries a deep historical significance. Rana Pratap Singh was the embodiment of the traditional virtues and defects of the typical Rajput, and from this point of view

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<sup>29</sup> G. N. Sharma, *Mewar and the Mughal Emperors*, p. 121. Saran presumably holds the same view, for he records his appreciation of Bihari Mal's submission: "he suffered neither from the recklessness nor the suicidal idealism of the typical Rajput". (*Provincial Government of the Mughals*, p. 142).

his successes and failures might well be judged. His political horizon was confined (like that of every normal Rajput of his age) to the rugged hills of his own State. We can hardly blame him for his uncritical loyalty to the past and his inability to make adjustments with the broadening imperial system created by Akbar. Local patriotism is the essence of medieval Rajput history, and the sturdy rulers of Mewar were its best exponents. A Rajput practically ceased to be a Rajput when he succumbed—as princes like Man Singh and Mirza Raja Jai Singh did—to the allurements of Mughal cosmopolitanism. If the Rajputs were—and remained—a distinct and loveable unit in our historical diversities, it is because they were guided by the “recklessness” and “suicidal idealism” reflected in Mewar’s resistance to the Mughals. The tribute which is paid even now to the memory of the great Rana is really a tribute to Rajput character in all its brilliance and folly.

The Rathor principality of Jodhpur, which had achieved unique prominence in Rajasthan during the stormy reign of Maldev, came peacefully under Mughal suzerainty after his death in 1581, when disputes about succession drove his son Udai Singh (known as the ‘Mota Raja’) into the imperial camp. The alliance was based on the usual conditions including matrimonial relations. The proud Rathors followed the politically wise but socially condemned precedent laid down by their Kachhwa rivals. Bikaner under Kalyan Singh (1541-71) had already chosen the same comfortable track. Jaisalmer also sought and received imperial protection and patronage. Thus by the end of the 16th century the Mughal banner was flying unchallenged over the whole of Rajputana with the exception of those small enclaves in Mewar where the Rana’s writ was still effective.

The peculiar position of the subordinate Rajput prin-



cialties within the Mughal imperial structure can be studied on the basis of data recorded in the *Ain-i-Akbari*<sup>30</sup>. Tod also supplies useful—though scattered—information on the nature of Mughal suzerainty. From the point of view of revenue administration the tributary Rajput States were included within the *Subah* of Ajmer. Of the seven *Sarkars* of that *Subah* only two (Ajmer and Nagor) were administered directly by imperial officers; the rest consisted of Rajput principalities. Each of them, it seems, contributed to the imperial treasury a fixed round sum as tribute, for the revenue figures in their case are generally given in even thousands. It was for the head of the Rajput State concerned to realise the revenue from the ryots and to raise the local militia; the Mughal Government had no direct concern with these matters. The *Subahdar* of Ajmer realised the tribute from the Rajput princes within his jurisdiction<sup>31</sup>, closely watched their political activities, and stationed *Faujدارs* and *Qiladars* in important forts like Ranthambhor; but he had no authority to interfere in the internal affairs of the States, which were fully self-governing in this respect.

The ruling princes of Rajasthan had full internal powers and dealt directly with the Central Government. The Emperor had, in theory, full control over succession. In every case of succession (which was generally governed by the rule of primogeniture) the selected candidate had to pay his homage and offerings before his formal installation on his ancestral *gadi*. Every Rajput State was treated, for official purposes, as a *jagir* which the Emperor conferred on his nominee. The chief obligations of the Rajput princes were the regular payment of the tribute and the regular

<sup>30</sup> See Saran, *Provincial Government of the Mughals*, pp. 126-133.

<sup>31</sup> Sirohi, Jalor, Dungarpur and Banswara were included within the *Subah* of Ajmer for revenue purposes, but politically they were attached to the *Subah* of Ahmedabad (Gujarat).

provision of contingents for the imperial army. The chief external restriction on their authority was the obligation to use the Mughal coins in their territories. No Rajput prince was allowed to mint coins in his own name till the middle of the 18th century, and even then the Emperor's name had to be inscribed on the Rajput coins in recognition of his suzerainty<sup>32</sup>.

Although subordination to the centralised despotism of the Mughals naturally circumscribed to some extent the power of the tributary Rajput princes, it is a fact that they grew stronger during the period of Mughal suzerainty *vis a vis* the "feudal" nobility within their own territories. Tod does not notice clearly this almost revolutionary result of two centuries of Mughal supremacy in Rajputana. He says: "Throughout Rajasthan the character and welfare of the States depend on that of the sovereign: he is the main spring of the system....."<sup>33</sup>. To what extent this pre-eminence of the prince in a "feudal" set-up was due to Mughal influence, he does not say. It has been suggested by a modern writer that the autocracy of the Mughal Emperors exercised an indirect influence on the political organization of the Rajput States: "The autocracy at the imperial capital supplied the incentive to the prince to play the autocrat in his more limited sphere of action"<sup>34</sup>. It was the influence of the Mughal court, we are told, which transformed the leader of the clan<sup>35</sup> into "the irresponsible bureaucrat" of the 18th century. This view takes into account the political support which the rulers derived from their contact with the Mughal system. The position of the Rajput princes loyal to the Mughal Empire was so

<sup>32</sup> W. W. Webb, *Currencies of the Hindu States of Rajputana*.

<sup>33</sup> *Sketch of a Feudal System in Rajasthan*, Chapter II: *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 174.

<sup>34</sup> S. C. Dutt, "Rajput Polity", *The Guardian*, August 22, 1931.

<sup>35</sup> See Lecture V.

secure that they could defy their nobles and set aside traditional restraints on their power. As they could count on Imperial assistance for the suppression of internal rebellions they could easily assume autocratic powers. Referring to Udai Singh of Marwar (1581-1595) Tod says:

"On the union of the imperial house with that of Jodhpur, by the marriage of Jodh Bai to Akbar,"<sup>36</sup> the emperor not only restored all the possessions he had wrested from Marwar, with the exception of Ajmer, but several rich districts in Malwa, whose revenues doubled the resources of his own fiscal domain. With the aid of his imperial brother-in-law, he greatly diminished the power of the feudal aristocracy, and clipped the wings of almost all the greater vassals, while he made numerous sequestrations of the lands of the ancient allodality and lesser vassals, so that it is stated, that, either by new settlement or confiscation, he added fourteen hundred villages to the fisc"<sup>37</sup>.

Referring to Sawai Jai Singh of Amber, Tod says:

"During these troubles (*i.e.*, "troubles which ensued on the demise of Aurangzeb"), Jai Singh's power as the King's lieutenant in Agra, which embraced his hereditary domains, gave him ample opportunity to enlarge and consolidate his territory."<sup>38</sup>

These two extracts give us some idea about the way in which the Rajput principalities protected by the Mughal Emperors were transformed into something like autocratically governed States. In Mewar, however, the course of events was different: there the Crown became weaker and the nobility stronger.

Mewar's contact with the Mughal Empire affected the

<sup>36</sup> Jodh Bai was married to Jahangir.

<sup>37</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, p. 965.

<sup>38</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. III, p. 1351.

position of her rulers in three directions. As we have pointed out above, it was during the Mughal period that Mewar lost her old pre-eminence among the Rajput States. Amber and Jodhpur rose to prominence under the Mughals, for their princes rendered conspicuous services to the Empire for about two centuries. But the princes of Mewar kept themselves aloof from the splendour of Delhi and Agra, even after the treaty with Jahangir, and thereby lost the advantage which fell to successful generals and courtiers like Mirza Raja Jai Singh of Amber and Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur<sup>39</sup>. "The Maharana of Udaipur, in spite of his pre-eminent descent, was a negligible factor of the Hindu population of the Mughal world, as he hid himself among his mountain fastnesses, and never appeared in the Mughal court or camp"<sup>40</sup>. Thus in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries we find the princes of Amber and Jodhpur playing the leading role in the Imperial court, and the Rana of Mewar was steadily pushed into the background.

This loss of prestige could not but affect the Rana's power and influence in his own State. There were other factors also which contributed to his weakness. In pre-Mughal times it was the custom to change the estates (called 'fiefs' by Tod) of the nobles after a few years, so that none of them might acquire strong local influence. They attended the Rana's court and tried to satisfy him by loyal service, for it was to him—and to him alone—that they looked for preferment. During the long struggle against the Mughal Empire this system was changed in a way favourable to the nobles. The Ranas were on numerous occasions driven from the plains and compelled to

<sup>39</sup> "The Court of Jaipur, by its assiduity and the services which it rendered to that of Delhi by contributing to its strength, had the precedence and the right of mediation above all the other Indian Courts before the Mughal Emperors . . . .". Pillet's Memoir on Jaipur, 1794. (*Poona Residency Correspondence*, Vol. VIII, p. 2).

<sup>40</sup> Sarkar, *History of Aurangzib*. Vol. III, p. 324.



take refuge in the hills. During these periods of confusion they could not transfer the nobles from one "fief" to another, for most of the "fiefs" were virtually under the control of the Mughal garrisons scattered over the country. On the conclusion of permanent peace with the Mughal Government in 1615 most of the nobles found themselves in possession of fixed estates, from which the Ranas could no longer dislodge or transfer them. Moreover, the loyalty and self-sacrifice of the nobles in the long war against the Mughals induced the Ranas to load them with honours and to increase their possessions. Thus in the 17th century the position of the nobility became stronger than ever before.

Again, the increase of material possessions was accompanied by a simultaneous promotion in rank and honour. Captain Brookes wrote in 1859, "In the Durbar, they (*i.e.*, the nobles) take rank above the heir-apparent, a custom unprecedented in India, and granted in consequence of the heir-apparent having attended the Emperor's Court<sup>41</sup>. When a chief enters the presence, the entire court, including the prince, rises to receive him, and the whole ceremonial is so intricate, that it has been a puzzle to every European officer who has had any connection with Meywar"<sup>42</sup>.

It would be a mistake to think, however, that the Rana of Mewar was a puppet. Contrasting the reigns of Raj Singh (1652-80) and Jai Singh (1680-98) Tod says:

"The reigns of Raj Singh and Jai Singh illustrate the obvious truth, that on the personal character of the Chief of a feudal government everything depends. The former, infusing by his talent and energy patriotic sentiments into all his subordinates, vanquished in a series of conflicts the vast military resources of the empire, led by the emperor,

<sup>41</sup> The privilege granted by the treaty of 1615, *i.e.* representation of the Rana in the Imperial Court by his eldest son, was considered so humiliating that the heir-apparent was degraded in his own capital.

<sup>42</sup> *History of Meywar*, pp. 55-56.

his sons, and chosen generals ; while his successor, heir to this moral strength, and with every collateral aid, lowered her to a stage of contempt from which no talent could subsequently raise her."<sup>43</sup>

Apart from the personal ability of the ruling prince there was another factor which proved to be an effective restriction on the power of the nobles in Mewar. It was their poverty. They had to provide food, clothing and opium for all their needy relations, even those most remotely connected with them. The size of an estate was no criterion of its owner's affluence, for the owner of a large estate might be encumbered with more than the average proportion of dependants. In the 18th century the weakness of the Ranas and the confusion created by the inroads of the Marathas enabled many nobles to encroach upon the crown estates and thereby to increase their own income. It is said that the chief of Lawah had plundered the covering of the Rana's sole elephant<sup>44</sup>.

Although the political repercussions of Mughal suzerainty in the Rajput States, as noted above, were felt gradually in course of the 16th and 17th centuries, they were the inevitable product of the system initiated and consolidated by Akbar. Despite the general uniformity of control inherent in that system there were certain differences between Mewar and the other States, arising mainly out of the provisions of the treaty which brought Rana Pratap Singh's principality within the orbit of the Mughal imperial system. Apart from the restoration of Chitor on condition that it would not be fortified or repaired, the treaty conferred on the Rana two special privileges. The first was his exemption from the humiliating practice of matrimonial relations with the imperial family—a proud privi-

<sup>43</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 460.

<sup>44</sup> Brookes, *History of Meywar*, p. 19.

lege, indeed, from the social point of view, but one which had been conceded many years ago to the much less important ruling family of Bundi. It enhanced the social prestige of the Guhilot princes but did not contribute to their political prominence. The second, and by far the most important, privilege was the Rana's exemption from the customary personal attendance at the Imperial court: he was to be represented at the Mughal Durbar by his eldest son. It was a unique privilege indeed, not granted to any other tributary prince of the Mughal Empire before or after 1615. But it was this unique privilege which separated the stream of Mewar's history from that of the history of the other Rajput States in the 17th and 18th centuries. While the Rathors under Jaswant Singh and Ajit Singh and the Kachhwas under the two Jai Singhs played a distinguished role in Imperial history and augmented their prestige as well as their territories, the rulers of Mewar sank steadily into inevitable obscurity as a result of their proud isolation from the triumphs of the suzerain Power.

Characteristically Mewar rose into prominence once again for a brief period in the days of Raj Singh, who chose to revive the tradition of hostility to the Mughal Empire. His open revolt against Aurangzib, provoked, no doubt, by the latter's illiberal policy, was the natural climax of the uneasy relations between the Mughal Government and the Ranas of Mewar since 1615. Resentment against the treaty remained a silent but constant factor in Mewar's policy. Rana Karan Singh provided political refuge for Jahangir's rebel son Khurram. Rana Jagat Singh incurred Shah Jahan's displeasure by his aggressive interference in the affairs of small principalities like Sirohi, Pratapgarh and Banswara. An invasion of Chitor by the Imperial forces was averted by courteous submission and offer of

presents. But Jagat Singh violated the terms of the treaty by repairing the fort of Chitor towards the close of his reign and the work was continued by his successor, Raj Singh. The result was the Mughal invasion of 1654. Once again Mewar saved herself by renewed submission. Then, after long years of peace during which Raj Singh took significant defensive measures<sup>45</sup>, hostilities broke out in connection with Aurangzib's seizure of the Rathor principality of Marwar after the death of Jaswant Singh.

It was not as a champion of Hinduism that Raj Singh took up arms against Aurangzib in 1679. Neither the Imperial orders for the destruction of temples<sup>46</sup> nor the re-imposition of the *Jiziya* provoked him to premature resistance. The celebrated letter of protest to the Emperor in connection with the *Jiziya*, attributed by Tod<sup>47</sup> to Raj Singh, seems really to have been sent by Shivaji<sup>48</sup>. It was because the projected Mughal occupation of Marwar was—for political and geographical reasons—almost a direct threat to Mewar's security that he seems to have taken up arms reluctantly against Delhi. Chivalrous support to a woman and an infant in distress does not explain satisfactorily a political adventure of such grave import.

After Raj Singh's death (October 22, 1680) his less enterprising son and successor Jai Singh concluded peace with Aurangzib in 1681, leaving the Rathors to the wolves. The terms were humiliating enough, for the new Rana ceded three parganas (Mandal, Pur and Badnor) in lieu of the *Jiziya*. Henceforward Mewar lived in peace with the Mughal Empire : neither Jai Singh nor his successor Amar Singh defied Aurangzib's authority.

But Mewar reaped no reward—except peace—for her

<sup>45</sup> E.g. fortification of Deobari Pass in 1674 (*Raj Prasasti*, VIII, 26-28).

<sup>46</sup> G. N. Sharma, *Mewar and the Mughal Emperors*, pp. 162-163.

<sup>47</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 442-443.

<sup>48</sup> J. N. Sarkar, *Modern Review*, 1908, pp. 21-23.



tame submission to the decaying Empire. After Aurangzib's death the weakness of his successors was utilised by the contemporary rulers of Marwar and Amber (Ajit Singh and Sawai Jai Singh) for self-aggrandizement, but the weak and short-sighted rulers of Mewar failed to make proper use of this excellent opportunity for the restoration of Guhilot pre-eminence. Tod says, "...while Amber appropriated to herself the royal domains<sup>49</sup> almost to the Jumna : while Marwar planted her banner on the battlements of Ajmer, dismembered Gujarat, and pushed her clans far into the desert, even to the 'world's end' ; Mewar confined her ambition to the control of her ancient feudatories of Abu, Idar, and the petty States which grew out of her, Dungarpur and Banswara"<sup>50</sup>. Again: "Rajasthan benefited by the demolition of the empire: to all but Mewar it yielded an extension of power"<sup>51</sup>. Sir Jadunath Sarkar says, "The Maharana, who had ever since the coming of the Mughals filled the highest place in the public eye among the Hindu chiefs of India, now fell back into complete isolation and obscurity. His unrivalled social status and the mythical glamour of his blood still remained ; but in the political field, from the beginning of the 18th century onwards, the primacy among the Rajputs was contested between the Kachhwah and the Rathor"<sup>52</sup>.

The long and bitter struggle between the Mughals and the Rathors (1679-1708) came to an end after Aurangzib's death. "A generation of time passed in Marwar in ceaseless conflict, captures, and recaptures". The breach with the Rajputs was a patent source of weakness to the Mughal Empire. "When", says Tod, "Aurangzeb neglected the indigenous Rajputs, he endangered the keystone of his

<sup>49</sup> Mughal territories.

<sup>50</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 476-477.

<sup>51</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 473.

<sup>52</sup> *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. I, p. 130.

power . . . .”<sup>53</sup>. Ajit Singh was able to attain a commanding position in the Mughal court, but his shifting policy stood in the way of the consolidation of his influence in Imperial affairs.

Amber's rise to prominence was due to the favour of the Mughals and the ability of its rulers. “The once third-rate and obscure house of Amber”, says Sir Jadunath Sarkar, “had risen in the course of a century and a half to the front rank by the most brilliant and valued service to the empire in far apart fields, thanks to the signal capacity for war and diplomacy displayed by four generations of its chieftains—Bhagwan Das and Man Singh under Akbar, Mirza Rajah Jai Singh under Shah Jahan and Aurangzib, and Sawai Jai Singh under the later Mughals”<sup>54</sup>. Sawai Jai Singh (1698—1743) was a remarkable man. Tod says. “As a statesman, legislator, and man of science, the character of Sawai Jai Singh is worthy of an ample delineation, which would correct our opinion of the genius and capacity of the princes of Rajputana, of whom we are apt to form too low an estimate”. But this gifted ruler lacked some of the essential qualities of a Rajput chief. Tod says that “his reputation as a soldier would never have handed down his name with honour to posterity : on the contrary, his courage had none of the fire which is requisite to make a Rajput hero : though his talents for civil government and court intrigue, in which he was the Machiavelli of his day, were at that period far more notable auxiliaries”<sup>55</sup>.

The disruption of Imperial authority provided ample scope for territorial expansion for the ambitious vassals of Delhi. “At the accession of Jai Singh”, says Tod, “the *raj* of Amber consisted only of the three *parganas* or dis-

<sup>53</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 462.

<sup>54</sup> *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. I, p. 130.

<sup>55</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. III, pp. 1341-1342.

tracts of Amber, Daosa, and Baswa ; the western tracts had been sequestered, and added to the royal domains<sup>56</sup> attached to Ajmer. The Shekhavati confederation was superior to, and independent of, the parent State, whose boundaries were as follows. The royal *thana* (garrison) of Chatsu, to the south : those of Sambhar to the west, and Hastina to the north-west : while to the east, Daosa and Baswa formed the frontier". But his "power as the king's lieutenant"<sup>57</sup> in Agra, which embraced his hereditary domains, gave him ample opportunity to enlarge and consolidate his territory"<sup>58</sup>.

A fairly long period of Mughal suzerainty brought the Rajputs into contact with the big and varied world from the wild hills of Central Asia to the swamps of Assam, from the snow-clad mountains of the north-west to the hill forts of Maharashtra. It familiarised them with a vast and complicated administrative and military organization. It showed them how local patriotism could be submerged beneath a tidal wave of political unity. Unfortunately the parochial Rajput mind reacted unfavourably to this visible demonstration of unity on a vast scale. It yearned for the idealised past—the past of isolation, of petty strife, of suicidal pursuit of clan orthodoxy or family pride. That past came back as soon as the Imperial rod was withdrawn. "No superior power was left to enforce lawful rights and prevent ambitious conflicts between one vassal State and another, or between one prince and another of the same royal house. All the pent up personal ambitions and interstate rivalries now burst forth without fear or check, and Rajputana became a zoological garden with the barriers of the cages thrown down and the keepers removed"<sup>59</sup>. In

<sup>56</sup> Mughal territories.

<sup>57</sup> Mughal Governor.

<sup>58</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. III, p. 1351.

<sup>59</sup> Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. I. p. 131.

the 18th century Rajputana sank into a political and moral squalor unparalleled in her long and tumultuous history.

Politically speaking, the Mughal Empire fulfilled a definite purpose in Rajputana. It kept the Rajput States under effective control for more than a century, preventing mutual hostilities between the big States and protecting the minor States against the aggression of their more powerful neighbours. It controlled the succession in the States and thereby eliminated civil war. That these were no mean achievements is abundantly clear from the political history of Rajputana in the first half of the 18th century. Tod's eloquent narrative, corrected and elaborated by Sir Jadunath Sarkar in his *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, tells us what the elimination of the Mughal suzerainty meant for Rajputana. The civil war in Jaipur (after Sawai Jai Singh's death in 1743) and in Marwar (after Abhay Singh's death in 1749) would have been impossible in the 17th century. The Rathor-Kachhwah disputes culminating in the battle of Gangwana (1741) could not have led to an open breach in the days of the Great Mughals. Sawai Jai Singh's interference in Bundi (1729) would not have been permitted by Aurangzib and his predecessors. The political vacuum left by the Mughals was filled up by the Marathas with disastrous consequences to the Rajput principalities.

There is no doubt that the Mughal political system curtailed the independence of the Rajput States and imposed on them ceremonials which offended their pride. But it gave their rulers virtually unlimited opportunities for political and military triumphs outside the narrow boundaries of their ancestral dominions. The careers of Man Singh, Jaswant Singh and the two Jai Singhs illustrate this point. No such opportunity was offered to the Rajputs by the Maratha successors to Mughal suzerainty.



This contrast emphasizes the wisdom of the Imperial system devised by Akbar. He utilised the Rajput princes for high imperial purposes without encroaching unnecessarily upon their political authority over their own subjects. The policy of direct annexation which Aurangzib applied towards Marwar was a grievous mistake, for it repudiated the basis of Rajput-Mughal relations on which much of the Empire's prestige and security depended in the days of his predecessors. The Marathas carried the mistake a step further by squeezing money out of the barren hills and desert of Rajputana without giving the Rajputs any of the compensations which had reconciled them to Mughal suzerainty.

The consequences of the long and intimate contact of the Rajputs with the Mughal court and Government were by no means confined to the political sphere. Inevitably the Rajputs learnt many things. There were changes in the character of the Rajput princes which were sometimes inconsistent with their traditions and social ideals. Mirza Rajah Jai Singh is described by Sir Jadunath Sarkar as "an adept in the ceremonious courtesy of the Muslims, a master of Turki and Persian, besides Urdu and the Rajput dialect". This versatility was the result of his long association with the Mughal court. "His foresight and political cunning", we are told, "his smoothness of tongue and cool calculating policy, were in striking contrast with the impulsive generosity, reckless daring, blunt straightforwardness, and impolitic chivalry which we are apt to associate with the Rajput character"<sup>60</sup>. His letter to Aurangzib's prime minister Jafar Khan, written after Shivaji's flight from Agra, shows that this "sanctimonious" Rajput prince "was prepared to prove his loyalty by lowering his family honour

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<sup>60</sup> *Shivaji*, p. 103.

and laying a fatal snare for Shivaji, a brother Hindu"<sup>61</sup>. The "political morals" of the 17th century were determined by the atmosphere of intrigue, ambition and treachery which prevailed in the Mughal court and the traditional Rajput virtues succumbed to the continuous onslaught. Sir Jadunath Sarkar refers to Sawai Jai Singh's "love of sensual ease, misappropriation of the imperial chest of military defence, and the treacherous subserviency to the enemies of the country"<sup>62</sup>. The Rajput princes and nobles undoubtedly contracted some of the Mughal vices, such as excessive addiction to wine and women, which demoralised their character and sometimes created serious political complications.

In the spheres of literature and art, however, the Rajputs received from the Mughals fruitful lessons of enduring value. They learnt, for instance, the art of writing comprehensive historical chronicles, like the well known *Khyat* of Nensi. In the painting and architecture of medieval Rajputana Mughal influence is evident even to the most casual observer. It is by no means confined to a State like Jaipur which had the longest and most intimate association with the Mughal court. It is evident even in Mewar<sup>63</sup> which kept itself isolated from the Mughal court as far as possible. For good or for evil the Great Mughals destroyed the age-old barriers and opened Rajputana—its physical and mental borders alike—to the wider world.

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<sup>61</sup> Sarkar, *Shivaji*, p. 154.

<sup>62</sup> See *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. I, p. 135.

<sup>63</sup> G. N. Sharma, *Mewar and the Mughal Emperors*, pp. 196-197

## LECTURE V

### MEDIEVAL RAJPUT POLITY

In the present state of our knowledge it is not possible to give a satisfactory account of the political, military and social organization of the Rajputs during the period of Muslim rule in India. The available bardic chronicles have not yet been thoroughly studied. So far as we know, they are concerned primarily with dramatic military exploits, and it is hardly possible to extract from them any clear idea about the nature and actual working of medieval Rajput polity. "The quasi-historical poems and commemorative songs of the *charanas* rather magnify, as they are expected to do, the achievements of the princes, and the people have left few spokesmen"<sup>1</sup>. For obvious reasons the Persian chronicles are not of much assistance in this matter. Inscriptions are rare and practically useless for our purpose.

Tod's chapters on *Sketch of a Feudal System in Rajasthan*<sup>2</sup> contain a brief description of Rajput political organization in his days, with special reference to the conditions prevailing in Mewar. He was an enthusiastic but careful and acute observer. He has left for us a record of many valuable facts which bring to light some interesting aspects of Rajput polity, although in some cases the value of his observations is affected by his obvious anxiety to discover elements of European Feudalism in the Rajput States. It must also be noted that Tod's account relates to the conditions prevailing towards the close of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century. We cannot be sure

<sup>1</sup> S. C. Dutt, "Rajput Polity", *The Guardian*, August 22, 1931.

<sup>2</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 153-245.

whether his observations should be regarded as applicable to the political organization of the Rajputs in the pre-Mughal age or even in the 17th century. The medieval political and military systems of the Rajput States were vitally affected by historical vicissitudes in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Tod does not fail to notice the disintegrating effects of Mughal rule and Maratha plunder on the original Rajput systems of government and war. He says: "Maratha cunning, engrafted on Mahomedan intolerance, had greatly obscured these institutions"<sup>3</sup>.

Every Rajput State was, generally speaking, one particular clan politically organised into one unit under the pressure of historical circumstances and economic conditions which were not remembered clearly in later days. "In every State", says a modern writer, "the ruling class belongs to one particular clan . . . . The humblest members of the clan considered themselves along with the ruler as the sons of the same father enjoying their patrimony by the same right as the ruler himself. The latter was thus nothing but a *primus inter pares* . . . . The State in fact did not belong to the ruler—it belonged to the clan as a whole"<sup>4</sup>.

This identification of the clan with the State was the most characteristic feature of medieval Rajput polity. Although Tod was not unaware of the ramifications of the clan system he did not understand fully its far-reaching effects on the historical evolution of the Rajput State. The clan system not only affected the internal administration of the States : it stood in the way of the political unification of Rajputana. Even in the worst days of the Maratha Empire there was a central authority which symbolised the political aspirations of the Maratha people and to which

<sup>3</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 154.

<sup>4</sup> S. C. Dutt, "Rajput Polity", *The Guardian*, August 22, 1931.



at least lip homage was paid by the rulers of the constituent units. In the second half of the 18th century the autonomous Sikh *Misls* recognised—at least formally—the supreme authority of the *Sarbat Khalsa*. But never in the long history of Rajasthan did her princes succeed in evolving any central authority like the Peshwaship or even any central deliberative assembly like the *Sarbat Khalsa*. Submission to a common superior was basically inconsistent with the traditions of the clan system.

Those traditions crystallized themselves into clan feuds which constitute one of the most sordid features of Rajput history. The jealous rivalry between the Rathors and the Kachhwahs was, says Sir J. N. Sarkar, “the dominating factor of Rajput society even under British rule”<sup>5</sup>. Clan rivalry had been “the dominating factor of Rajput society” for many centuries: it was not due to external forces like Mughal intervention. Rana Sanga, whom Rajput chroniclers proudly called *Hindupal*, found at Khanua that the Rajput clans could not serve under a common banner even against a common foe. Babur says: “.....the Rajas and Rais of high degree, who obeyed him in this battle, and the governors and commanders who were amongst his followers in this conflict, had not obeyed him in any earlier fight or, out of regard to their own dignity, been friendly with him”<sup>6</sup>. Really speaking, Sangram Singh was trying to impose on the Rajputs a new type of unity which could not be fitted into the traditional political and social organizations of the Rajputs.

Sangram Singh's failure to unite the different clans against Babur explains why the heroic Rajputs could not play a larger and more fruitful part in Indian history. Not to speak of the Marathas, the Rajputs failed to do even

<sup>5</sup> *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. I, p. 130.

<sup>6</sup> Beveridge, *Memoirs of Babur*, Section III, pp. 561-562.

what the Sikhs did. They could not in medieval times extend their political authority beyond their mountains and desert. Had any Rajput prince succeeded in creating a compact kingdom comprising the whole of Rajasthan it might have stood as a strong barrier against the expansion of Muslim power in central, western and southern India. But the Rajputs were so parochial in outlook and so indifferent to cataclysmic political changes around them that they did not stir out of their secluded forts even after the conquest of Gujarat by Alauddin Khalji. When enterprising Muslim chieftains divided India among themselves in the 15th century the heroes of Mewar exhausted their strength in practically fruitless contests with the Muslim rulers of Malwa and Gujarat. When the Mughals came the Kachhwahs and the Rathors surrendered without fighting, and Mewar's long struggle remained an isolated disturbance from the standpoint of Delhi. In the 18th century the inheritance of the Great Mughals fell to the Marathas, to the Sikhs, to Muslim adventurers like the Nizam and the Nawabs of Bengal and Oudh. The Rajputs spent themselves in clan rivalries and civil wars.

The history of the Rajputs is thus a tragic story of lost opportunities. They could not rise above the parochialism on which the clan system was based. They could not think of India as a whole. They could not place themselves in the wide perspective of history. Deeply rooted in the past, stagnant in ideas as well as in methods, they lost those glittering prizes which history offers to rulers and peoples who can plunge boldly into the unknown in pursuit of large plans and great visions.

If the clan system made it impossible for the medieval Rajputs to win spectacular successes on the stage of Indian history, it also created a political system which made internal conflicts inevitable. As the nobles owed their

privileges and estates primarily to their membership of the clan and only secondarily to the prince's favour, they did not submit easily to royal control. In every Rajput State, therefore, the central authority was perpetually weak. A strong-willed warrior-prince might be able to maintain tolerable order and discipline; but if circumstances raised minors or weaklings or imbeciles to the *gadi*, the inevitable results were strife and chaos. The history of the second half of the 18th century provides several illustrations of this basic defect of the Rajput political system. Zalim Singh's amazing career shows how an over-mighty minister could carve out a principality for his own family even in the 19th century.

It must be noted that there is no analogy between the greedy nobles of the Mughal court in the days of the Later Timurids and the Rajput nobles who, like the Chundawats and the Saktawats of Mewar<sup>7</sup> or Sawai Singh of Pokaran<sup>8</sup>, defied their rulers with impunity. While the former were adventurers without roots in the soil and dependent on uncertain Imperial favour or the fleeting support of mercenary troops, the latter were hereditary lords of estates with customary rights and devoted followers. No top-ranking Rajput noble could be liquidated in the way in which the all-powerful Syed brothers were swept away from the political stage. The Syeds left no one to avenge their fall: but the murder of Devi Singh of Pokaran left a trail of blood which pursued the rulers of Marwar for many years<sup>9</sup>.

The social and economic organizations of the Rajputs were based on the clan system. Clan rivalry and family pride were the dominating forces of social life, and various

<sup>7</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 511 ff.

<sup>8</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, p. 1080 ff.

<sup>9</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, pp. 1070-1071, 1080-1090, 1098-1099.

evils, such as female infanticide<sup>10</sup>, were connected with them. A man's place in the social hierarchy was determined by two factors—birth and the value of the land owned by him. These two factors were interconnected, for ownership of land was in most cases regulated by birth. Land was sacred, for its possession indicated the owner's place in his clan as well as his economic competence. It embodied the basic principles of social cohesion. It enshrined traditions handed down from generation to generation. The sanctity attached to patrimony led to many crimes, just as the idealisation of clan customs led to many social evils. "There was no crime which a Rajput would not commit for the sake of land. Father killed son and son murdered father. Women of the noblest rank gave poison to their trusting kinsmen. Kings took the lives of loyal ministers"<sup>11</sup>. Here, as elsewhere, economic forces strengthened sentiment and tradition. The ruling class in every Rajput State depended primarily on income from land, for trade and commerce—repugnant to their martial traditions—were in the hands of the other sections of the population<sup>12</sup>. The sterile soil of Rajputana could not give them princely incomes. Hence land grabbing became a common vice.

The clan system vitally affected the military organization of the Rajputs. No standing army could be maintained because the military and political traditions of Rajasthan were inconsistent with such concentration of military power. There were important economic reasons too. There was no money in the princely exchequer to pay

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<sup>10</sup> Tod says that the laws which regulated marriage amongst the Rajputs powerfully promoted this horrible custom. See *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, p. 741; Brookes, *History of Meywar*, p. 97.

<sup>11</sup> Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. I, p. 131.

<sup>12</sup> Tod says: "The officers of the State and revenue are chiefly of the Jain laity, as are the majority of the bankers, from Lahore to the ocean". (*Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, pp. 603-604).

soldiers ; assignments on lands could not be given because all lands (except the *Khalsa*) belonged to the nobles. The prince was, therefore, obliged to depend on the armed followers of the nobles. To what extent the nobles disliked military reforms is clear from Vikramaditya's cruel fate. The traditional charges against him are thus summarised by Tod :

".....he was insolent, passionate, and vindictive, and utterly regardless of that respect which his proud nobles rigidly exacted. Instead of appearing at their head, he passed his time amongst wrestlers and prize-fighters, on whom and a multitude of 'paeks' or foot-soldiers, he lavished those gifts and that approbation, to which the aristocratic Rajpoot, the equestrian order of Rajasthan, arrogated exclusive right. In this innovation he probably imitated his foes, who had learned the superiority of infantry, despised by the Rajpoot, who, except in sieges, or when 'they spread the carpet and hamstrung their steeds', held the foot-soldier very cheap. The use of artillery was now becoming general, and the Moslems soon perceived the necessity of foot for their protection : but prejudice operated longer upon the Rajpoot, who still curses 'those vile guns' which render of comparatively little value the lance of many a gallant soldier ; and he still prefers falling with dignity from his steed, to descending to an equality with his mercenary antagonist"<sup>13</sup>.

The significance of this passage lies in its exposition of the repugnance of the Rajput warriors to any modification of the traditional military system with which were closely connected the political and social structures in Rajasthan. Babur's success at Khanua was due not in a small measure to his artillery. To quote Sir Jadunath Sarkar :

<sup>13</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 360-361.



"As the Rajputs surged up towards Babur's centre in a vast tumultuous shouting crowd, they saw before them a flash like lightning, then a roar of thunder, and lastly a huge hot stone ball came hurtling through the air like a burning meteor, which . . . . . crushed everything in its path. Even elephants could not stand before it. . . . . Those Rajputs who had galloped up closer to the front were stabbed by small fire-flashes which vomited a hail storm of burning slugs and stone chips spreading like grape-shot through their ranks. These were the musket-bullets. The Rajputs had never seen anything like it before"<sup>14</sup>.

It was not at all surprising that the rigid mind of the Rajput noble should be unable to grasp the significance of this novel military experience. The role of artillery and infantry in the military operations of the new age was inconsistent with the position which the nobility had held for centuries in the court and in the field. The exaltation of the infantry would have revolutionised the Rajput social structure: the "vile guns" would have diminished the importance of the sword-clad horseman. Although Vikramaditya seems to have been an impetuous and tactless young man, he took the lessons of Khanua seriously enough and "lavished . . . . gifts and . . . . . approbation" on "a multitude of . . . . . foot-soldiers". The reform, commendable in itself, was doubtless premature in the context of the conditions prevailing in Rajputana and Vikramaditya had to pay a heavy price for his sins, including his unusual appreciation of military realities. The clan system refused to adjust itself with the new military factors introduced by the Central Asian Mughals.

Despite its all-pervasive influence the clan system had lost much of its original purity and force in the 18th cen-

<sup>14</sup> *Military History of India*, p. 59.

tury. Ambitious princes anxious to imitate the Mughal pattern of autocracy naturally tried to undermine the authority of the clans as represented by the nobles. One of the measures adopted by them to achieve this purpose was to introduce within their States some nobles who were "foreign in country and blood", i.e. who belonged to clans different from the dominant local clan. Tod says, "Chiefs of Rathor, Chauhan, Pramara, Solanki and Bhatti tribes were intermingled". The epithet of *kala patta*, or "black grant", was applied to all grants of land to "foreign" nobles<sup>15</sup>. Naturally the position of these nobles was less secure than that of the nobles of the indigenous clan, and the ruler could place greater reliance on outsiders having no root in the soil and absolutely dependent on his favour.

Of the 18 chief nobles of Mewar mentioned by Tod<sup>16</sup> as many as 9 were "foreign in country and blood". From the important estate of Ghanerao, says Tod, "the Rana could command four thousand Rathors holding lands on the tenure of service, of whom the Ghanerao chief... was the head". It was held by a Rathor noble of the Mertia clan. The chief of Rupnagar, a conspicuous member of the second grade of the Rana's nobility, was a Solanki.<sup>17</sup> A Bhatti held the important estate of Khejurla in Mewar. Bijolia, one of the principal "fiefs" in Mewar, was held by a Paramar.<sup>18</sup>

The composition of the indigenous nobility in Mewar was very complex. Writing in 1859 a British political officer having first-hand acquaintance with conditions in Mewar observed: "None of the principal chiefs of Mewar are the descendants of those who received estates in the country on its conquest by Bappa Rawul. Of the existing

<sup>15</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 193-194.

<sup>16</sup> See List in *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 587.

<sup>17</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, p. 798-800.

<sup>18</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 587.

chiefs, some are of tribes differing from the Oodeypoor family, while the greater number are collateral descendants of comparatively recent Ranas, the oldest and most important being separated from the reigning princes by eighteen generations, or about 480 years. The latter regard themselves as a brotherhood, of which the Rana is the head. They possess peculiar privileges, and are called Home chieftains, in contradistinction to chiefs who have emigrated from other countries, and acquired estates and titles in Meywar, and who are called *Foreign chieftains*”<sup>19</sup>.

The most important of all the nobles of Mewar, indigenous as well as foreign, was the Rawat of Salumbar, the head of the Chundawat clan, and the direct descendant of Chunda, the eldest son of Rana Lakha, who is said to have surrendered his right to the throne to his younger brother Mokal in the fifteenth century. In renouncing his right to the throne Chunda retained for his descendants the right to advise the Rana on all important matters of State and the principal place in the council of the prince. This somewhat extraordinary relationship between the ruler and one of the nobles was not peculiar to Mewar. “In Marwar”, says Tod, “the dignity is hereditary in the house of Awa. . . . .”<sup>20</sup>. It was probably the political extension of a socio-economic custom. “In each Rajput family and even in each Bheel Pal,<sup>21</sup> especially in case of incompetency in the head, there is a ‘Baujgurrea’ who is consulted in all important transactions, and without whose advice nothing is undertaken”<sup>22</sup>. This custom prevailed also in Central India. Malcolm says, “When a noble is raised by his (*i.e.*, ruler’s) favour to power, but without distinct office, he is termed a counsellor or mediator : such person being generally

<sup>19</sup> Brookes, *History of Meywar*, p. 54.

<sup>20</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 218.

<sup>21</sup> A village inhabited by Bhils within the estate of a Rajput chief

<sup>22</sup> Brookes, *History of Meywar*, pp. 54-55.

deemed a channel of intercourse between the prince and his subjects"<sup>23</sup>. He adds, "the Hindu name of this officer is Bhaujgurtee". It seems, however, that while in Mewar the office was strictly hereditary, in other States and estates it was not always so. Tod speaks of "hereditary Rajput premiers in several of these States".<sup>24</sup>

The peculiar position of the Rawat of Salumbar<sup>25</sup> raised difficult problems in Mewar. The extent of his powers and privileges was undefined, and the Rana naturally tried to free himself from this thralldom. For generations the Ranas and the Rawats were on bad terms; in spite of this the chief of Salumbar could not be deprived of his customary privileges. At the time when the treaty with the Company was being negotiated the Rana's agent, who was a relative of the Rawat of Salumbar, wanted to introduce a clause guaranteeing the position of the 'Baujgurree' to the Rawat of Salumbar<sup>26</sup>, but Metcalfe merely gave an assurance that "the good conduct of the minister would ensure His Lordship's (*i.e.*, the Governor-General's) approbation". Thus the age-old custom failed to survive the alliance with the Company, and a very unpleasant and inconvenient restriction on the Rana's power was abolished by Metcalfe's shrewd interference.

Next in importance to the Chundawat nobles were the Saktawats, the descendants of Rana Pratap's brother Sakta Singh. These two powerful families were hostile to each other, and the Ranas supported the Saktawats in order to balance the power of the Chundawats. During the long reign of Rana Bhim Singh (1777—1828) the bitter feud between these two powerful families created anarchy and

<sup>23</sup> *Memoir of Central India*, Vol. I, p. 549.

<sup>24</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 216.

<sup>25</sup> See *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 217.

<sup>26</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 216.

confusion in Mewar and was largely responsible for the depredations of the Marathas in that unhappy State.

Although *kala pattas* became more or less familiar in the Rajput States it should be remembered that, generally speaking, the prince was never absolutely free to dispose of any substantial portion of the patrimony of the clan in favour of "foreign" nobles. Tod says, "Though in all these estates there is a mixture of foreign Rajputs, yet the blood of the chief predominates". The clan system was too strong to be completely broken.

This statement applies with particular force to Marwar. Of the 24 first and second class nobles mentioned by Tod, only two were "foreigners". Tod says, "The aristocracy in Marwar has always possessed more power than in any of the sister principalities around. The cause may be traced to their first settlement in the desert : and it has been kept in action by the peculiarities of their condition, especially in that protracted struggle for the rights of the minor Ajit, against the despotism of the empire. There was another cause,..... which arose out of the laws of adoption".<sup>27</sup>

Our information about the early history of the Rathors, from the time of Siha to the accession of Chunda in or about 1381 A.D., is extremely meagre : but a critical study of the annals brings out some important features. The Rathors were multiplying in number and wandering in pursuit of land. Conflicts naturally followed, not only with the Muslims who had occupied important posts like Nagor, but also with Rajput clans like the Parihars of Mandor, the Bhattis of Jaisalmer and the Chauhans of Jalor, as well as aboriginal tribes like the Bhils. The struggles arising

<sup>27</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, p. 1066. For the operation of the laws of adoption see Tod's remarks on the Pokaran Fief, *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, pp. 1066-1067, 860-862.



out of the pursuit of land were not always conducted by the head of the clan, *i.e.*, the ruler of the new-born Rathor State; it seems that the Rathor chiefs, especially the enterprising members of the collateral branches of the ruling family, fought in many cases for themselves, and looked upon as their own estates which they might conquer by their own prowess. In such cases the allegiance to the ruler was purely nominal. Thus the central authority in the Rathor State was weak from its very birth.<sup>28</sup>

To that weakness another factor contributed. Up to the 14th century the principle of primogeniture did not regulate succession to the headship of the Rathor State. The most successful member of the ruling family secured the headship of the State, and in those days of strife and turmoil nobody cared for mere right of birth. Even in the 17th century Jaswant Singh, the second son of Gaj Singh, succeeded his father in supersession of the claim of his elder brother Amar Singh. This violation of primogeniture was due to the desire expressed by Gaj Singh on his death bed, which was confirmed by Emperor Shah Jahan; but the significant fact is that it was not opposed by the nobles who were probably satisfied with the succession of any member of the ruling family.<sup>29</sup>

In the 16th century Maldev made an attempt to strengthen the central authority at the expense of the nobles. At his accession the authority of the ruler of Jodhpur was practically limited to the districts of Jodhpur and Sojhat. Collateral branches of the ruling family controlled the districts of Bikaner, Phalodi, Merta and Mallani, over which the paramountcy of the head of the State was hardly recognised. Maldev temporarily succeeded in imposing his authority on his over-mighty subjects, but

<sup>28</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, pp. 962-963.

<sup>29</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, pp. 975-976, 979.

the suspicion evoked by his policy in the minds of the nobles was largely responsible for his failure in the struggle against Sher Shah.<sup>30</sup>

It was really difficult to determine the exact relationship between the head of the Rathor State and his nobles. The ruler might claim their full allegiance and effective authority over their estates, for he was the head of the State and of the clan as well. The nobles might resent the interference of the ruler in the affairs of their estates, which they or their ancestors had conquered with little or no assistance from the central authority. Such a constitutional problem arose in every Rajput State, and nowhere was a working solution discovered. The moderation of the rulers and the principle of *swami-dharma* or loyalty to the lord, which was an active force in Rajput life, averted dangerous crises.<sup>31</sup>

The establishment of Mughal suzerainty, as we have pointed out above, strengthened the prince and reduced the nobility to a difficult position. A new situation, however, arose after the death of Jaswant Singh. The Rathors had to wage a long war against Aurangzib for their very existence. They fought in the name of their minor prince, Ajit Singh, who could not give them effective leadership. Just as the Maratha war of independence after Sambhaji's defeat and death stimulated "feudal" tendencies and increased the power of ambitious military chieftains, so also the long war of the Rathors against the Mughal Empire removed most of the restrictions imposed by tradition and custom upon the nobles and eclipsed the central authority which was practically non-existent for a quarter of a century. After Aurangzib's death Ajit Singh was restored to power and for some years occupied a prominent

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<sup>30</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, pp. 955-957.

<sup>31</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, pp. 962-964.

place at the Mughal court ; but his repeated rebellions, and the progressive decline of Imperial authority, made it impossible for him to crush the Rathor nobles with Mughal support. In the second half of the 18th century Marwar was torn by civil war and devastated by the Marathas, and the rulers could not consolidate their power. So the nobles of Marwar remained more powerful than their brethren in the neighbouring States, and the Rathor princes could not make themselves "irresponsible bureaucrats".

Of the 26 principal nobles of Jaipur mentioned by Tod no less than 10 were "foreigners"<sup>32</sup>.

In all Rajput States, next to the prince in rank and power was the chief holding his estate directly from the Crown. The origin of these "fiefs" may be traced to various factors. Some of them consisted of lands occupied by collateral branches of the ruling family with little or no assistance of the ruling prince. For instance, we may refer to the estates of Bika, a younger member of the Rathor ruling family, and of the chiefs of the Shekhawat federation. Some of the "fiefs", again, arose out of circumstances similar to those which led to the growth of 'marches' or 'marks' in medieval Europe. With regard to Mewar Tod observes, "The local disposition of the estates was admirably contrived. Bounded on three sides, the south, east, and west, by marauding barbarous tribes of Bhils, Mers, and Minas, the circumference of this circle was subdivided into estates for the chiefs, while the *khalisa*, or fiscal land, the best and richest, was in the heart of the country, and consequently well protected"<sup>33</sup>. Thus some of the chiefs were originally wardens of the marches, defending the heart of the kingdom (i.e., the Crown demesne) against the frontier tribes.

<sup>32</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. III, p. 1438.

<sup>33</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 166.



The holders of these two classes of "fiefs" were in all cases Rajputs, and in most cases they belonged to the prince's own clan. A different class of "fiefs" may be called "official fiefs". Tod says, "Titles are granted, and even fiefs of office, to ministers and civil servants not Rajputs; they are, however, but official, and never confer hereditary right. These official fiefs may have arisen, here and in Europe, from the same cause: the want of a circulating medium to pay the offices. The Mantris of Mewar prefer estates to pecuniary stipend, which give more consequence in every point of view.....In Mewar the prince's architect, painter, physician, bard, genealogist, heralds, and all the generation of the foster-brothers, hold lands".<sup>34</sup> Finally, the weakness of the prince occasionally led to the creation of new "fiefs", just as in Lancastrian England the "over-mighty" nobles unscrupulously seized the lands of the Crown. Tod says, "Many estates were obtained, during periods of external commotion, by threats, combination, or the avarice of the prince—his short-sighted policy, or that of his ministers.....".<sup>35</sup>

The chiefs were divided into different grades according to their income and status in the prince's court. In Mewar there were four grades. Tod says, "The honours and privileges, and the gradations of rank, amongst the vassals of the Rana's house, exhibit a highly artificial and refined state of society. Each of the superior rank is entitled to a banner, kettle-drums preceded by heralds and silver maces, with peculiar gifts and personal honours, in commemoration of some exploit of their ancestors". Some of the powerful and wealthy chiefs lived in a semi-royal style. Tod says, "The court and the household economy of a great chieftain is a miniature representation of the

<sup>34</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 165.

<sup>35</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 195.

sovereign's..... He must have his *shish-mahal*, his *bari-mahal*, and his *mandir*, like his prince"<sup>36</sup>.

One of the most important duties of the chiefs was to attend the prince's court. Tod says, "For state and show, a portion of the greater vassals reside at the capital for some months, when they have permission to retire to their estates, and are relieved by another portion. On the grand military festival the whole attend for a given time ; and when the prince took the field, the whole assembled ....."<sup>37</sup>

"On all grand occasions", says Tod, "where the general peace or tranquillity of the Government is threatened, the chiefs form the council of the sovereign.....To be excluded from the council of the prince was to be in utter disgrace".<sup>38</sup> But in Mewar "the martial vassals" had no concern with the promulgation of laws.<sup>39</sup> In Feudal Europe the vassals of the Crown were not excluded from this important privilege. This is an important point of difference between European Feudalism and the system of government prevalent in Rajputana, but Tod has not appreciated its significance.

So far as the distribution of justice in, and the internal economy of, the "fiefs" were concerned, the chiefs practically enjoyed uncontrolled authority. The prince's *chabutra*, or "terrace of justice", could not ordinarily be established "within the bounds of a chief". Tod says, "Now each chief claims the right of administering justice in his own domain, that is, in civil matters ; but in criminal cases they ought not, without the special sanction of the crown ..... the self-constituted tribunals, the *panchayats*, sit in judgment in all cases where property is involved".

<sup>36</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 162, 167-168, 199.

<sup>37</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 173.

<sup>38</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 172.

<sup>39</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 170-171.



Again: "In cases regarding the distribution of justice or the internal economy of the chief's estates, the government officers seldom interfere".<sup>40</sup>

The political and military systems on which the Rajput States had been reared during the medieval period were in a melting pot at the time when they came into contact with expanding British imperialism. Was Tod correct in describing these systems as feudal? Our answer to this important question may be best expressed in the words of the *Rajputana Gazetteer*:

"In fact, the system upon which the land is distributed among the branch families and other great hereditary landholders, is the basis of the political constitution of a Rajput State and forms its characteristic distinction. And this system is not, speaking accurately, feudal, though it has grown in certain States into something very like feudalism. The tenure of the great clansmen involves military service and payment of financial aids, but its source is to be found in the original clan-occupation of the lands, and in the principles of kinship and a purity of descent from the original occupants or conquerors".<sup>41</sup>

Let us analyse those principal features of the medieval Rajput system which appeared to be "something very like feudalism" and led Tod to believe that a full-fledged Feudal System had developed in Rajasthan. It would then be necessary to enquire into the origin of these features with a view to determining whether the circumstances were similar to those culminating in European Feudalism.

Sub-infeudation, in the proper sense of the term, was unknown in Rajputana, but in large estates the chiefs generally allotted villages for maintenance of their sons and brothers. Tod says, "In all the large estates, the chief

<sup>40</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 171-172.

<sup>41</sup> First edition (1879), Vol. I, pp. 59-60.

must provide for his sons or brothers, according to his means and the number of immediate descendants". This system weakened the nobility and was sometimes "ruinous to the protection and general welfare of the country".<sup>42</sup> It was also occasionally detrimental to the interests of the State. "It is pursued", says Tod, "in some parts till there is actually nothing left sufficiently large to share, or to furnish subsistence for one individual: consequently a great deprivation of services to the State ensues". This system was, however, prevalent more in "the isolated tributary Thakurats or lordships scattered over the country" than in "the large principalities". In Mewar the chiefs were careful not to let this practice become too common; "they send the extra numbers to seek their fortunes abroad".<sup>43</sup>

The nature and strength of the Rajput political organization were determined by two important factors: the reciprocal duties of prince and chiefs and the relations between chiefs and their "sub-vassals". Tod's observations on these points are illustrated by two important documents quoted by him. These documents embody the views of the chiefs of Mewar and the "sub-vassals" of Deogarh, "one of the largest fiefs in Rajasthan". In their complaint to the British Government against Raja Man Singh of Marwar the chiefs of that State declared, "Sri Maharaja and ourselves are of one stock, all Rathors. He is our head, we his servants..... *When our services are acceptable, then is he our lord; when not, we are again his brothers and kindred, claimants and laying claim to the land*".<sup>44</sup> There could be no clearer definition of the reciprocal duties of prince and chiefs, no more authentic interpretation of the idea that the State was the joint pro-

<sup>42</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 201-202.

<sup>43</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 202.

<sup>44</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 228-230, 182.

perty of the clan. The same idea is forcefully expressed in the remonstrance of the "sub-vassals" of Deogarh against their chief: "*When Deogarh was established, at the same time were our allotments: as his patrimony, so is our patrimony..... Our rights and privileges in his family are the same as his in the family of the Presence (i.e., the Rana)*".<sup>45</sup>

If the "sub-vassals" had their rights they had their duties too. They were bound to follow the standard of the lord (i.e., the chief) even against their sovereign. Tod says, "If the question were put to a Rajput to whom his service is due, whether to his chief or his sovereign, the reply would.....imply that his own immediate chief is the only authority he regards".<sup>46</sup> Numerous instances could be given of whole clans devoting themselves to the chief against their sovereign.<sup>47</sup> Those "sub-vassals" who wished to stand well with their chiefs would be "very slow in receiving any honours or favours" from the prince.<sup>48</sup> No "sub-vassal" could perform any service to the prince except through his own immediate superior. No Rajput prince was wise or strong enough to impose an oath of Salisbury on subjects whose service was available to the State only under these dangerous restrictions.

The looseness of the link between the prince and the "sub-vassals" was an obvious source of weakness, not only to the political structure of the Rajput State, but also to its military organization. Originally there was no standing army in any Rajput State: the prince had to depend on such forces as the chiefs could collect in any emergency. Naturally the loyalty of the chiefs, and the readiness of

<sup>45</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 230-232, 182.

<sup>46</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 182-183.

<sup>47</sup> See the account of the death of the Chief of Nimaz in *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, pp. 818-820.

<sup>48</sup> See the account of the Deogarh Chief and his "sub-vassal" in *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 183.

the "sub-vassals" to render service, were decisive factors. The system completely broke down in the 18th century under the pressure of the political and military chaos of that age of transition. Mewar had to create the nucleus of a standing army by enlisting some mercenaries from Sind. The principal motive was probably to deal with internal troubles caused by "over-mighty subjects". Tod has left for us an English version of a grant from Rana Ari Singh to a Sindhi chief named Abdul Rahim Beg (dated 1770). It is significant to note that this chief of Muslim mercenaries was granted rank and privileges similar to those enjoyed by the Rawat of Salumbar, "the first of home-chieftains".<sup>49</sup>

Tod has made an elaborate attempt to compare the general obligations of Rajput "vassals" with the "feudal incidents" of medieval Europe.<sup>50</sup>

The practice of realising *relief*—"a sum of money due from every one of full age taking a fief by descent"—was widely prevalent in the Rajput States, although during the troubled period preceding the establishment of British suzerainty "some of the Chiefs obtained renunciation of the fine of relief, which was tantamount to making a grant in perpetuity, and annulling the most overt sign of paramount sovereignty". In Mewar, says Tod, custom required "the *bona fide* surrender of the fief and renewal thereof". This implies a right of resumption on the part of the prince, but custom and political considerations rendered this formal right a dead letter.

*Alienation* required "the sanction of the lord paramount" only in cases of "donations for pious uses". In this respect, therefore, "Feudalism" in Rajputana was not similar to Feudalism in Europe. Although Tod refers to

<sup>49</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 233-234.

<sup>50</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 184-190.

"the remonstrance of the Deogarh vassals" he does not clearly realise that the clan system and the European custom of alienation were irreconcilable. The "vassals" of Rajputana derived their right to land, not from the prince's favour, but from their membership of the clan: the State was the property of the clan, and every member of the clan was entitled to his patrimony. Naturally the prince, who was virtually little more than the biggest co-sharer, could not exercise any rigid control over alienation.

*Escheats* in case of failure of natural heirs in lineal succession and *forfeitures*, partial or total, "for crimes..... according to delinquency" were well known in Rajasthan. Hereditary "fiefs" reverted to the Crown on failure of heirs, as these could not be bequeathed by will. But adoption was allowed, and in practice this custom restricted the prince's prerogative. The position of the *Bhumias* (landholders who enjoyed the prescriptive right of possession on the basis of inheritance) was naturally superior to that of the *Girasia*s (landholders who held *giras* or subsistence by a *patta* or grant of the prince).

*Aids*, implying "free gifts" or "benevolences", were realised by the Rajput princes from their chiefs and by the latter from the "sub-vassals". "On the marriage of the daughter of the prince, a benevolence or contribution was always levied". Special taxes, like the *barar* (war-tax) in Mewar, were imposed "in periods of emergency or danger". In medieval Europe "feudal aids" were payable for once marrying the King's eldest daughter, for making the King's eldest son a knight and for ransoming the person of the King. The *barar* and similar emergency levies might be placed in the third category in the European list.

*Wardship*, says Tod, "does exist, to foster the infant vassal during minority; but often terminating, as in the system of Europe, in the nefarious act of defrauding a



helpless infant, to the pecuniary benefit of some court favourite". The guardianship of infant chiefs was generally vested in their mothers, occasionally in the head of the clan or sub-clan concerned. Sometimes the prince himself undertook the responsibility.

The control exercised by the feudal Kings of Europe on the *marriage* of their vassals was never claimed by the princes of Rajputana.

"Thus", concludes Tod, "setting aside marriage (which even in Europe was only partial and local) and alienation, four of the six chief incidents marking the feudal system are in force in Rajasthan, *viz.*, relief, escheats, aids, and wardships". But in emphasizing the superficial resemblances between "feudal incidents" in medieval Europe and similar obligations of the nobles in medieval Rajputana Tod overlooked two important points. In the first place, he did not attach any importance to the point that the Rajput nobles did not enjoy the privilege of coining money and of waging private war which were among the most characteristic features of European Feudalism. In other words, while the feudal barons of medieval Europe enjoyed certain sovereign rights, their counter-parts in medieval Rajputana had to remain satisfied with lesser rights. There was, therefore, a basic difference between the status and privileges of the nobility in the two systems: there was no fragmentation of sovereignty in Rajasthan.

The second point is of still deeper significance. While in medieval Europe the King was the legal owner of the land which he granted to the tenants-in-chief in exchange of loyalty and service, in medieval Rajasthan the peasants enjoyed proprietary rights, leaving only usufructuary rights to the prince. Rajputana was, therefore, a land of free peasantry; villeinage was unknown. Tod says that "we have no parallel in Rajwara.....to the agricultural serfs and

*villeins* of Europe", although "acquired slavery" (*Basai*) was not unknown<sup>51</sup>. In Mewar, for example, the cultivator was the proprietor of the soil which he called his *bapota*, "the most emphatic, the most ancient, the most cherished, the most significant phrase his language commands for patrimonial inheritance". He had the right of alienation, "of entire conveyance by sale, or temporary by mortgage".<sup>52</sup> There were two methods of levying the revenues on corn: *Kankut* ("a conjectural assessment of the standing crop, by the united judgment of the officers of Government, the Patel, the Patwari or registrar, and the owner of the field") and *batai* ("division of the corn after it is thrashed"). It was for the cultivator to choose the method.<sup>53</sup> This system had no analogy in medieval Europe. It is difficult to think of European Feudalism without the serfs or villeins who provided its economic steel-frame. In the context of this vital difference superficial similarities in respect of "feudal incidents" should not be pressed too far. Moreland rightly points out that the use of the feudal terminology of Europe to denote Indian institutions having a superficial or even partial resemblance with European feudal institutions is highly inappropriate and misleading.<sup>54</sup> Crooke says: "It is of little service to compare two systems of which only the nucleus is common to both, and to place side by side institutions which present only a factitious similitude, because the social development of each has progressed on different lines".<sup>55</sup>

European Feudalism had its origin—politically speaking—in the breakdown of political authority. As the

<sup>51</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 206-210.

<sup>52</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 572-573, 578.

<sup>53</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 582.

<sup>54</sup> *Journal of Indian History*, April, 1938.

<sup>55</sup> *Annals*, Vol. I, Introduction, p. xxxix.

monarchies failed to satisfy the people's natural demand for protection, the latter sought a substitute and found it in the "over-mighty" nobility. Disintegration of sovereignty followed as the logical result of the assumption by the nobles of some of the duties—and appropriation by them of some of the rights and powers—of the Kings. Roman as well as Teutonic elements coalesced to give the new system an integrated complexity which found expression, at different stages and in different regions, in a variety of institutions, customs and practices. Such a background, however, was altogether absent in medieval Rajasthan. It has been said that at the end of the 12th century "the leading Hindu Chiefs of northern India collapsed like nine-pins in the first sweep of Turkish invasions from beyond the north-west"<sup>56</sup>. But this disaster did not affect Mewar, and it could not affect Marwar and Amber which came into existence later. Indeed, it cannot be said that the collapse of the princely authority in this part of India necessitated the emergence of feudal institutions.

According to Tod, "the unsettled state of society, and the deficiency of paramount protection" always existed in the Rajput States, but "the interminable predatory warfare of the last half century increased it to so frightful an extent that superior authority was required to redeem the abuses it had occasioned". The "feudal incidents" noted by him were most probably much earlier in origin than the "predatory system" in Rajputana. Their origin cannot, therefore, be ascribed to Maratha depredations. Apart from Mewar, which resisted the Mughals for half a century, and Marwar, which fought against Aurangzib for a quarter of a century, the Rajput States enjoyed a long period of peace under the Great Mughals. There was no breakdown of

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<sup>56</sup> Saran, *Studies in Medieval Indian History*, p. 3.

the socio-political order necessitating the emergence of baronial authority as a substitute for "paramount protection". Nor did "unsettled state of society" prevail in Rajputana during the days of the Delhi Sultanate except on rare occasions like Ala-ud-din Khalji's occupation of Chitor. Tod's description of the *Rakhwali* system seems to apply to the period of the Maratha depredations<sup>57</sup>; it would be anachronistic to relate it to any earlier period in the history of the Rajputs. Crooke overlooked the historical sequence when he equated "desire for protection" (which was a very important element in the rise of European Feudalism) with the *Rakhwali* of the Rajputs<sup>58</sup>.

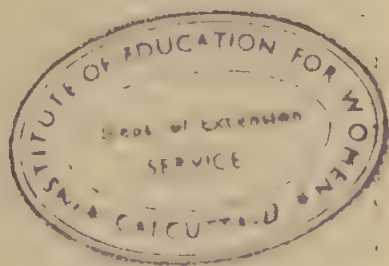
Really speaking, the system described by Tod as "feudal" was an offshoot of the clan system which was basic to the very existence of the Rajputs. The "incidents" noted by Tod were really associated with the patriarchal ideas which coloured the Rajput mind and controlled its reaction to political and social issues. Saran rightly says, "Many of the institutions and mutual obligations and duties between the Chief and his vassals in Rajputana arose from their patriarchal basis of society, unlike Europe where they arose out of a contract entered into by two parties (not of the same family or tribe), viz. the *Lord* and his *Client*"<sup>59</sup>. Contract was the basis of the relation between the King and the barons in medieval Europe, and—as the Magna Carta shows,—violation of the terms of the contract absolved the latter from their duty of allegiance to the former. In Rajasthan, however, it was not contract but the rights and obligations of patriarchy which determined the relation between the prince and his nobles, i.e., his kinsmen. Despite historical vicissitudes this basic

<sup>57</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 203-205, 515.

<sup>58</sup> *Annals*, Vol. I, Introduction, p. xxxix.

<sup>59</sup> *Studies in Medieval Indian History*, p. 9.

factor remained substantially unaffected till the imposition of British suzerainty. It is against this background that we should study the details of the administrative system supplied by Tod's *Annals*.





## LECTURE VI

### RAJASTHAN IN DECLINE

The fall of the Mughal Empire virtually synchronized with the decline of the Rajput States, for they had been closely integrated with the Mughal system and found themselves without a steady political anchorage when that system collapsed in the first half of the 18th century. The Rajput princes were no longer in a position to play an effective role in Imperial affairs as lieutenants of the Empire. While Muslim officials of the Empire, like the Nizam and the Nawabs of Bengal and Oudh, carved out semi-independent principalities for themselves, the Rajput princes turned more and more to the interior of Rajasthan. The decline and fall of the Mughal Empire circumscribed the sphere of their political and military activities. They were unable to secure any portion of the Mughal inheritance.

Ajit Singh of Marwar was closely connected with the Mughal court, but his shifting policy and defects of character deprived him of the pre-eminence which his father Jaswant Singh had enjoyed in the days of Shah Jahan and in the early part of Aurangzib's reign. His successor Abhay Singh served for two years as governor of Gujarat in Muhammad Shah's reign, but his real interest lay in domestic feuds. His attack on Bikaner led to hostilities between Marwar and Amber, culminating in the latter's defeat in the battle of Gangwana (1741). A war of succession broke out in Marwar after Abhay Singh's death (1749); the final victory lay with his brother Bakht Singh who utilised the assistance of the Imperial *Mir Bakhshi* against his nephew Ram Singh. This war of suc-

cession eventually exposed Marwar to Maratha inroads. It is clear that the Rathor rulers were unable to exploit the decadence of the Mughal Empire for their own benefit or for any constructive purpose.

Amber had no better record. Sawai Jai Singh, says Tod, "mixed in all the troubles and warfare of this long period of anarchy, when the throne of Timur was rapidly crumbling into dust"<sup>1</sup>. During Farrukh-siyar's reign he governed Malwa and fought against the Jats, but he could not distinguish himself as a soldier or general in the field. After the fall of the Sayyid brothers he became governor of Agra and led another expedition against the Jats. Later on, as governor of Malwa, he was guilty of collusion with the Marathas who were at that time establishing themselves in Malwa and Gujarat. If the Emperor's cause against the Marathas had been served, says Sir J. N. Sarkar, "with the courage, enterprise and fidelity of.....Mirza Rajah Jai Singh, instead of Sawai Jai Singh's love of sensual ease, misappropriation of the imperial chest of military defence, and treacherous subserviency to the enemies of the country, the Marathas would have been successfully kept out of Northern India, and Rajputana would have been spared the horrors of Maratha domination". This severe verdict on Sawai Jai Singh's career can hardly be challenged. He could not have saved the Mughal Empire; probably he could not have kept the Marathas out of Northern India for long. But he could have kept them out of Rajputana, and probably out of Malwa, for sometime. Instead of doing his duty as a Mughal satrap he interfered in the affairs of Bundi and in the dispute between Marwar and Bikaner, suffering a serious reverse in the battle of Gangwana

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<sup>1</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. III, p. 1341.

(1741). His death was followed by a war of succession which (as in the case of Marwar) provided an excellent opportunity for Maratha intervention.

By the middle of the 18th century, therefore, the Mughal period comes to a close in the history of the Rajput States and the Maratha period begins. This significant change was the inevitable result of the decline of the Mughal Empire. A political vacuum was created and the Marathas sought to fill it up because there was no political force in Northern India which could sustain the Mughal tradition and resist the new-comers from the south. Among the Rajputs there was no Rana Sanga who could even visualize the restoration of Rajput suzerainty in the north. While the Rajput princes exhausted themselves and wasted their resources in petty quarrels, the ideal of *Hindu Padshahi* emerged in the Deccan and waves of Maratha soldiers carried the flag across the mountains and rivers in the heart of India.

In the crucial early days of Maratha inroads the principal Rajput States were governed by princes whose character was not strong enough to face the new crisis. On Rana Jagat Singh of Mewar (1734-51) Tod says: "Addicted to pleasure, his habits of levity and profusion totally unfitted him for the task of governing his country at such a juncture; he considered his elephant fights of more importance than keeping down the Marathas"<sup>2</sup>. Bijay Singh of Marwar (1752-92) was weak and unwarlike. To quote a Rajput bard: "Fortune never attended the stirrup of Bijay Singh, who never gained a battle, though at the head of a hundred thousand men . . . . ."<sup>3</sup>. In his reign, says Tod, "the crownlands were uncultivated, the tenantry dispersed; and commerce had diminished, owing

<sup>2</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 495.

<sup>3</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, p. 1066.

to insecurity and the licentious habits of the nobles, who everywhere established their own imposts, and occasionally despoiled entire caravans"<sup>4</sup>. Sawai Jai Singh of Amber (1698-1743) had remarkable qualities. But he was fond of sensual pleasure and Tod, who admires his "talents for civil government and court intrigue, in which he was the Machiavelli of his day", says that "his reputation as a soldier would never have handed down his name with honour to posterity ; on the contrary, his courage had none of the fire which is requisite to make a Rajput hero"<sup>5</sup>.

The Holkar-Sindhia attack on Bundi in 1734 alarmed the whole of Rajputana and Sawai Jai Singh summoned a conference of Rajput princes to devise measures for the protection of their territories. But the Rajputs had ever been strangers to unity ; so the conference failed to produce any tangible result<sup>6</sup>. Rajputana became a helpless prey to Maratha aggression. Tod says: "Unity of interests was the chief character of the engagement, had they adhered to which, not only the independence, but the aggrandisement, of Rajasthan was in their power, and they might have alike defied the expiring efforts of Mughal tyranny, and the Parthian-like warfare of the Maratha . . . . . but difficult as it had ever proved to coalesce the Rajputs for mutual preservation, even when a paramount superiority of power, both temporal and spiritual, belonged to the Ranas, so now, since Amber and Marwar had attained an equality with Mewar, it was found still less practicable to prevent the operation of the principles of disunion".

Of the principal States of Rajputana Mewar was the

<sup>4</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, p. 1066.

<sup>5</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. III, pp. 1341-1342.

<sup>6</sup> Sir Jadunath Sarkar seems to ascribe the failure of the conference to "the moral decay of the Mughal nobility", without whose co-operation the Rajputs could not "keep the Deccani spoliators out of their fatherland". (*Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. I, p. 140).

<sup>7</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 483-484.

first victim of Maratha aggression. In 1736 Rana Jagat Singh II had to conclude a treaty with Peshwa Baji Rao, stipulating an annual tribute of Rs. 160,000 to cover which the Banhada pargana was ceded'. His successor, Pratap Singh II (1751-54), had to pay heavy contributions to the Marathas'. It was probably during his reign that Ram-pura, an important "fief" of Mewar, was assigned to Malhar Rao Holkar by Madho Singh of Amber, who had received it as an appanage from the Rana. This, says Tod, was "the first limb severed from Mewar"<sup>10</sup>. During the reign of Rana Raj Singh II (1754-61) the repeated depredations of the Marathas<sup>11</sup> "so exhausted this country, that the Rana was compelled to ask pecuniary aid from the Brahman collector of the tribute, to enable him to marry the Rathor chieftain's daughter"<sup>12</sup>.

The terrible disaster suffered by the Marathas at Panipat encouraged the Rajputs, and Madho Singh of Jaipur made half-hearted attempts to crush Maratha influence in Rajputana. But Mewar, distracted by minority rule and civil war, impoverished by the heavy contributions realised by the Marathas, failed to utilise this opportunity. The Holkars and Mahadji Sindhia intervened in the war of succession in Mewar in 1769 and Rana Ari Singh purchased temporary peace by an agreement to pay 64 lakhs. As Sir Jadunath Sarkar says, "The attempt to take 64 lakhs of Rupees in cash from the kingdom of Mewar in its then condition was as hopeful of success as a plan to draw blood out of stone. It only left a sore perpetually open between the Maharana and the house of Sindhia"<sup>13</sup>. This arrangement led finally to the

<sup>10</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 492-494.

<sup>11</sup> See, for instance, *Selections from Peshwa Daftar*, Vol. II, no. 34.

<sup>12</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 496.

<sup>13</sup> J. N. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, pp. 191, 196.

<sup>14</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 496.

<sup>15</sup> *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, p. 521.



establishment of Sindhia's administrative control over the districts of Jawad, Jiran and Nimach, while Holkar took the districts of Morwan and Nimbahera<sup>14</sup>. Thus were Mewar's limbs cut off in the interest of the Marathas<sup>15</sup>. In Hamir's reign (1773-78) Mewar had to seek Maratha assistance for restoration of internal order ; naturally large contributions had to be paid<sup>16</sup>.

In Marwar Maratha intervention was the direct result of the war of succession which followed Bakht Singh's death in 1752. The murder of Jayapa Sindhia by the Rathor envoy in 1755 was a crime which paid no political dividend. Bijay Singh (1752-92) had to cede Ajmer to the Marathas and Marwar became "the special hunting-ground of the Sindhia family".

In Jaipur the succession of Ishwari Singh (1743-50) was challenged by his younger brother, Madho Singh, who was supported by Rana Jagat Singh of Mewar in accordance with the terms of the Mewar-Amber treaty of 1708. The peculiar tragedy of this fratricidal conflict lay in the fact that both sides invoked, and secured at heavy prices, the armed assistance of the Marathas. Unable to fulfil the pecuniary demands of his relentless allies Ishwari Singh committed suicide in terrible circumstances. Madho Singh, placed on the *gadi* by Holkar's army, tried to keep the Marathas away by promises and intrigues.

Madho Singh's supreme chance came after Panipat. "Jaipur was now the strongest power in Rajputana, and its master, safely sheltered within his strongly fortified capital, could laugh an invasion to scorn"<sup>17</sup>. Most of the villages of Jaipur had protective walls and a martial popu-

<sup>14</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 504.

<sup>15</sup> The "rich province of Godwar" was seized by Bijay Singh of Jodhpur. (*Poona Residency Correspondence*, Vol. VIII, p. 14).

<sup>16</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 505-509.

<sup>17</sup> J. N. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, p. 196.

lation. In 1761 Madho Singh made a systematic attempt to dislodge the Marathas from Rajputana. With a view to organizing an anti-Maratha coalition he invited the co-operation of Ahmad Shah Abdali, the puppet Emperor Shah Alam II, Najib Khan and the Rajput princes. But Malhar Rao Holkar's victory over a large Jaipur army in the battle of Mangrol (November 29, 1761) destroyed Madho Singh's fond hope of uprooting Maratha power from Northern India. His failure to take advantage of the difficulties of the Marathas after the disaster at Panipat was due to his "lack of character, quarrels with his feudal barons, and above all chronic antagonism to Bijay Singh of Marwar, the only Rajput Prince that counted for anything"<sup>18</sup>. The rise of the Jats may also be noted in this connection. Madho Singh's death (1768) was followed by prolonged anarchy and turmoil in Jaipur, primarily because his two immediate successors were minors.

It would appear, therefore, that by the third quarter of the 18th century the Rajput States (with the exception of the geographically isolated States of Bikaner and Jaisalmer) were, more or less, in the grip of the Marathas. Tod makes no secret of his views on the "predatory" incursions of the Marathas. A large share of the miseries suffered by the Rajputs during the 18th and early 19th centuries was undoubtedly due to the unscrupulous greed of Sindhia and Holkar. They were constantly in need of money, and to them the hills and desert of Rajputana appeared to be as good a pagoda tree as the fertile Doab and the smiling plains of Bengal.

The situation became worse when Mahadji Sindhia consolidated his position as the virtual Regent of the Mughal Empire. The indecisive battle of Tunga (July,

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<sup>18</sup> J. N. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, p. 503.

1787), which the Rajputs interpreted foolishly as a victory, was followed by De Boigne's victories at Patan (June, 1790) and Merta (September, 1790). Three years later the Sindhia-Holkar rivalry for the domination over Hindustan<sup>19</sup> was decided in favour of Sindhia by his complete victory over Holkar in the battle of Lakheri (June, 1793). De Boigne and Perron "collected the due tribute from the Rajput States with tolerable ease and not more than the usual amount of irregularity"<sup>20</sup>. But the restlessness in Rajputana burst into a flame in 1800. The result was the decisive defeat of the Marwar-Jaipur coalition in the battle of Malpura (April, 1800).

The battles of Patan, Merta and Malpura are of great interest to all students of the Rajput military system. Neglect of artillery and infantry and over-confidence in the traditional valour of the cavalry were largely responsible for the defeats which the Rajputs suffered in these battles. Their reaction to the changing military methods was half-hearted and consequently ineffective.

It is true that they no longer relied on "feudal" levies. The unsettled conditions of the 18th century made it necessary for every leading Rajput State to create a standing army. "In Marwar", says Tod, "the feudal compact was too strong to tolerate it (*i.e.*, a standing army), till Pathan predatory bands, prowling amidst the ruins of Mogul despotism, were called in to partake in each family broil; the consequence was the weakening of all, and opening the door to a power stronger than any to be the

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<sup>19</sup> "In 1791 the diwan of Jaipur likened this Holkar-Sindhia rivalry to a combat between two wild elephants, which he was watching from a safe distance, and he frankly said that he would discharge his Raja's debt only after one of these two Maratha chiefs had asserted his superiority over the other beyond question". (J. N. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. IV, p. 70).

<sup>20</sup> J. N. Sarkar, *Poona Residency Correspondence*, Vol. VIII, Introduction, p. iii.

arbitrer of their fate." The "turbulent vassalage" of Marwar could not be overawed without the assistance of "a foreign mercenary force". The "Rohilla and Afghan infantry" employed by the princes of Marwar, "having cannon and sufficient discipline to act in a body", were "formidable to the Rajput cavaliers". Man Singh of Marwar had a corps of 3,500 foot and 1,500 horse, with 15 guns, commanded by Hindal Khan, who was familiarly addressed as "uncle". In addition to the Muslim mercenaries there was in Marwar a brigade of "monastic militants" or fighting *Sannyasis*. The commanders of the mercenaries were not satisfied with monthly pay only: "lands to a considerable amount" were granted to them. At one time the ruler of Marwar maintained a mercenary force consisting of 11,000 men. Apart from the financial strain imposed by "these overgrown establishments" on the prince's "fiscal revenues", the employment of Muslim mercenaries offended the Rajputs and widened the breach between the rulers and the ruled. The "feudal contingents" were estimated at 5,000 horse, besides foot<sup>21</sup>.

Mewar had a force composed of Sindhi adventurers. Tod has preserved for us an English version of a grant from Ari Singh to a Sindhi chief<sup>22</sup> who rendered "great" services in the war of succession against Ratan Singh. The Muslim adventurer received estates worth two lakhs, annual cash payment of Rs. 25,000 and various privileges including "a seat in Durbar and rank in all respects equal to the chieftain of Sadri<sup>23</sup>." The grant refers to the "Deccani army", i.e. Mahadji Sindhia's army, which the Rana had to buy off with a promise to pay 64 lakhs. It is a curious commentary on the decay of the Guhilots'

<sup>21</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, p. 1119.

<sup>22</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 233-234.

<sup>23</sup> "The first of the foreign vassals of the Rana's house".

valour to find them using Muslim mercenaries in suppressing internal disloyalty and resisting Maratha incursions.

Jaipur adopted the custom of employing mercenaries to a greater extent. In 1803 the "foreign" army of Jaipur was 13,000 strong, consisting of ten battalions of infantry with guns, a legion of 4,000 Nagas, a corps of *Aligols*<sup>24</sup> (irregular infantry) for police duties and 700 cavalry. In addition there was "the regular contingent of feudal levies, amounting to about 4,000 efficient horse".<sup>25</sup> In spite of its numerical strength the standing army of Jaipur was "an ill paid band, neither respected at home nor feared abroad".

In Bikaner "the household troops" consisted of a battalion of foreign infantry and three squadrons of horse, "all under foreign leaders". There was a separate garrison at the capital under a Rajput commander<sup>26</sup>.

In Jaisalmer Rs. 75,000 had to be spent annually on *Sihbandis* or mercenaries<sup>27</sup>.

Zalim Singh of Kotah also maintained "foreign troops" under "foreign leaders". Dalil Khan and Mihrab Khan were his military advisers. The former built fortifications, while the latter kept the infantry "in a state of admirable discipline and efficiency". Zalim Singh kept their pay in arrears presumably to ensure their loyalty.

The dependence of the Rajput princes on mercenaries was a very significant change in the Rajput military system and Tod was fully aware of its far-reaching implications. He says: "We do not mean that the Rajput princes never employed any other than their own feudal clans; they had foreign Rajputs in their pay, but still on the same tenure, holding lands for service; but never till this period had they soldiers entertained on monthly stipend. The hired

<sup>24</sup> See Irvine, *Army of the Indian Moghuls*, p. 164.

<sup>25</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. III, pp. 1435-1436.

<sup>26</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, p. 1161.

<sup>27</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, p. 1251.



bands were entirely composed of infantry, having a slight knowledge of European tactics, the superiority of which, even over their highminded cavaliers, they had so severely experienced in their encounters with the Mahrattas. The same causes had operated on the courts of Udaipur and Jaipur to induce them to adopt the like expedient: to which, more than to the universal demoralization which followed the breaking up of the empire, may be attributed the rapid decay of feudal principles throughout Rajputana. These guards were composed either of Purbia Rajputs, Sindhis, Arabs, or Rohillas. They received their orders direct from the prince, through the civil officers of the State, by whom they were entrusted with the execution of all duties of importance or dispatch. Thus they soon formed a complete barrier between the prince and his vassals, and consequently became objects of jealousy and of strife. In like manner did all the other States make approaches towards a standing army: and though the motive in all cases was the same, to curb, or even to extinguish, the strength of the feudal chiefs, it has failed throughout, except in the solitary instance of Kotah, where twenty well disciplined battalions, and a hundred pieces of artillery, are maintained chiefly from the feudal sequestrations<sup>24</sup>.

It would appear, therefore, that the emergence of the mercenary army in Rajputana was initially connected with the clan system and not with the Maratha menace. It was the second stage in the process of the princes' struggle against the "feudal" chiefs, the first stage being the enlistment of "foreign" Rajputs. The policy of the princes (who had learnt some lessons from the centralisation of power under the Mughals) was "to curb, or even to extinguish,

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<sup>24</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, pp. 1067-1068.

the strength of the feudal chief".<sup>29</sup> But this policy did not succeed. The Rajput princes of the 18th century were not gifted with that strength of character which was indispensable for carrying out such a revolutionary change in the traditional system. Moreover, they could not concentrate their attention on this anti-"feudal" policy because the Maratha incursions kept them anxious about the larger problem of security. Indeed, the Maratha menace compelled them to placate the "feudal" chiefs. Thus the half-hearted use of the mercenaries for internal purposes failed to promote royal authority. On the other hand, it had a mischievous effect in so far as it created a new "barrier between the prince and his vassals" and stimulated "jealousy" and "strife" at home while the Marathas were ready for raids.

The Rajput armies which faced the Marathas had no homogeneity at all, for there could hardly be any union of hearts between the proud clan-chiefs and the mercenary leaders—mostly Muslims—who sold their services for hard cash. Leadership was weak, particularly in those cases where the Marathas fought under European command. The "opium-eating Rajputs" and the "indolent Nagas"<sup>30</sup> were not accustomed to the swift movements and surprises which distinguished Maratha campaigns. Inferiority in weapons was a constant source of weakness. The Nagas as well as the irregular infantry were usually armed with swords and spears. Such cannons and match-locks as were available on the Rajput side were usually old and rusty. Personal courage was no substitute for superiority in leadership, tactics and weapons. The bitter lessons of Patan and Merta were not altogether lost on the Rajput princes, some of whom tried later on to raise trained battalions with the

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<sup>29</sup> See Lecture IV.

<sup>30</sup> J. N. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. IV, p. 30.

help of French mercenary captains. "These men could not rival De Boigne's achievement, and their inefficient troops, by their heavy pay-bill, only increased their Raja's insolvency and disorder in his realm".<sup>31</sup>

The military decadence of the Rajputs was closely connected with the moral decay of Rajput society in its upper strata. Tod says about Rana Bhim Singh (1778-1828) of Mewar whom he knew well: "Vain shows, frivolous amusements, and an ill-regulated liberality alone occupied him.....He had little steadiness of purpose, and was particularly obnoxious to female influence"<sup>32</sup>. The last years of the life of Bijay Singh (1752-92) of Marwar were (says Tod) "engrossed by sentimental folly with a young beauty of the Oswal tribe, on whom he lavished all the honours due to his legitimate queen"<sup>33</sup>. According to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, she was a religious mate rather than a concubine; Bijay Singh, a devout Vaishnav of the Vallabhachari sect, treated her as his Radha and on this ground "their union may fairly be called a morganatic marriage"<sup>34</sup>. In any case, Bijay Singh's infatuation for her enabled her to control the administration through a horse-tamer named Bhairo Sani. Her political ambition created many troubles, not the least harmful of which was a disputed succession. Sawai Pratap Singh (1778-1803) of Jaipur is described by Tod as "a gallant prince, and not deficient in judgment"<sup>35</sup>. According to Collins, he was "a compound of pride, meanness and avarice"<sup>36</sup>. Sir Jadunath Sarkar says: "Anticipating the decadent Nawabs of Oudh, he used to dress himself like a female, tie bells to his ankles and dance

<sup>31</sup> J. N. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. IV, p. 72.

<sup>32</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 558.

<sup>33</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, p. 1075.

<sup>34</sup> *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. IV, pp. 53-57.

<sup>35</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. III, p. 1363.

<sup>36</sup> *Poona Residency Correspondence*, Vol. VIII, No. 172. See also *Poona Residency Correspondence*, Vol. VIII, No. 1.

within the harem. His time was mostly devoted to drinking and attending songs and dances..... Sometimes he would sally forth at night with the ruffianly companions of his wine-cup, raid the houses of the bankers and jewelers, beat them and snatch away their money! In addition to his unkingly and unmanly vices, his reckless speech and violent temper alienated the proud Rajput nobility and they left his capital for their seats in shame and disgust"<sup>37</sup>. His successor Jagat Singh (1803-1818) is described by Tod as "the most dissolute prince of his race or of his age". He was infatuated with an "Islamite concubine" called "Ras-kafur" whom he "formally installed" as queen of half of his dominions and actually "conveyed to her in gift a moiety of the personality of the crown, even to the invaluable library of the illustrious Jai Singh, which was despoiled, and its treasures distributed amongst her base relations". Coins were struck in her name. The Raja not only rode with her on the same elephant, but demanded from his nobles those forms of reverence towards her, which were paid only to his legitimate queens. Heavy fines were imposed on those nobles who refused to respect her as a queen. The end of this powerful concubine was pathetic. Jagat Singh lent his ear to "a report injurious to the fair fame of his Aspasia", and condemned her to the prison-castle of Nahargarh which was "allotted for criminals"<sup>38</sup>.

"Throughout Rajasthan", says Tod, "the character and welfare of the States depend on that of the sovereign: he is the main spring of the system—the active power to set and keep in motion all ..... discordant materials; if he relax, each part separates, and moves in a narrow

<sup>37</sup> *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. III, p. 337.

<sup>38</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. III, p. 1365.

sphere of its own"<sup>39</sup>. It is clear that by the end of the 18th century the "sovereigns" of Rajputana were no longer capable of working as "the main spring of the system". Naturally the "discordant materials" gained the upper hand and "each part" tended to "separate and move in a narrow sphere of its own". The integrating force emanating from the prince, who was the head of the clan as well as the head of the State, was visibly weakened by the moral depravities dominating the court. The royal vices spread gradually to the nobles and the richer classes and undermined the vigour which had been the proudest asset of Rajput society in the past.<sup>40</sup>

The struggle between the Chundawats and the Saktawats in Mewar in the last quarter of the 18th century is one of the worst examples of clan feuds which increased the vulnerability of the Rajput States to Maratha aggression during this period. It started with the murder of the Chundawat chief by Rana Ari Singh. During the reign of the minor Rana Hamir Singh (1773-78) the Saktawats supported the queen-mother, who was naturally opposed by the Chundawats. The mercenary Sindhi troops joined the feud. Tod says: "..... the demoralization of Mewar was complete: her fields were deluged with blood, and her soil was the prey of every paltry marauder". It was Maratha intervention—invited by the queen-mother—which restored order, but a heavy price in territories and contributions had to be paid for this assistance<sup>41</sup>. The feud, however, continued. In 1789 Somchand Gandhi, the loyal and able minister, was murdered by the Chundawat chief almost in the Rana's presence, but the helpless ruler was

<sup>39</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 174.

<sup>40</sup> Sir Jadunath Sarkar was painfully surprised to "learn from the Marathi despatches that many of the Rajput Rajas, nobles and ministers were infected by the filthy unmentionable disease which is Nature's punishment for gross licentiousness". (*Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. IV, p. 72).

<sup>41</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 505-509.



“unable to punish the insolent chief”. The successors of the murdered minister—his brothers—declared open war against the Chundawats. The Rana remained a helpless spectator.

The result of this long and bitter feud could not but be disastrous to the State. Tod says, “The agriculturist, never certain of the fruits of his labour, abandoned his fields, and at length his country; mechanical industry found no recompense, and commerce was at the mercy of unlicensed spoliation. In a very few years Mewar lost half her population, her land lay waste, her mines were unworked, and her looms, which formerly supplied all around, forsaken. The prince partook of the general penury; instead of protecting, he required protection; the bonds which united him with his subjects were snapped, and each individual or petty community provided for itself that defence which he could not give. Hence arose a train of evils: every cultivator, whether fiscal or feudal, sought out a patron, and entered into engagements as the price of protection. Hence every Rajput who had a horse and a lance, had his clients; and not a camel-load of merchandise could pass the abode of one of those cavaliers without paying fees”<sup>42</sup>.

It was Mahadji Sindhia who finally suppressed the Chundawats in 1791.

In Marwar the lead against the ruler's authority was assumed in the early years of the 19th century by one of the leading nobles, Sawai Singh of Pokaran, who had to avenge the murder of his grandfather by Bijay Singh<sup>43</sup>. He “put himself in hostility” to Man Singh (1803-1843), and in Tod's picturesque words, he held his sword “sus-

<sup>42</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 514-515.

<sup>43</sup> See *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol II, pp. 1070-1071.

pended over the head of Raja Man from his enthronement to his death hour".

In Jaipur the crafty "fief"-holder of Macheri, Pratap Singh Naruka, carved out a principality for himself, which came to be known as the State of Alwar. In Kotah Zalim Singh, the all-powerful minister, reduced the prince to the position of a puppet. His peculiar position was recognised by a "supplementary Article" (February 20, 1818) added to the East India Company's treaty with Kotah (December 26, 1817), which provided that "the entire administration of the affairs of the principality" would be vested in Zalim Singh and his heirs "in regular succession and perpetuity". This arrangement was found to be unworkable, and after Zalim Singh's death (1824) Kotah was dismembered "to create the new principality of Jhalawar as a separate provision for the descendants of Zalim Singh" (1838)<sup>44</sup>.

It is a gloomy picture of degeneration and disintegration, and Tod is not quite wrong in connecting it with the "predatory" incursions of the Marathas. The Mughal Emperors in a sense deserved the tribute which they exacted from Rajputana, for they enforced internal as well as external peace, and afforded the Rajput princes sufficient scope for the display of their military ardour and administrative skill. As generals and provincial governors several Rajput princes played a distinguished part in the history of the Mughal Empire. But the Marathas rendered no service in exchange for the large sums they realised by force from the impoverished Rajput States. Instead of suppressing internal dissensions in those States they utilised them for their own aggrandisement. When Imperial

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<sup>44</sup> Aitchison, *Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads*, Vol. III, pp. 360, 375-379, 393-397.

generals like Mirza Najaf Khan and adventurers like Afmir Khan devastated Rajputana, the Maratha overlords of the Rajput States did not come to their rescue. No Rajput prince was allowed to fight under the Maratha banner as a respected and valued vassal ; the Maratha Empire gained nothing from the loyal service of the Rajputs, although the part played by them in the extension and consolidation of the Mughal Empire was even then a living memory. Had the Marathas utilized the Rajputs as the Mughals had done, the history of India in the 18th century would in all probability have flowed through different channels.

In criticising Maratha policy towards the Rajput States two important points should be remembered. In the first place, frequent invasions and consequent devastations of territory were rendered necessary by the persistent refusal of the Rajput princes to honour their agreements with the Marathas. They were determined not to pay money unless they were forced to do so. The Marathas knew this and applied force whenever their demands were refused. The two parties thus moved in a vicious circle ; Rajputana lay prostrate under the heel of her oppressors. Secondly, the depredations caused by the Maratha forces grew in extent and horror with the increase of the non-Maratha element in the armies led by Sindhia and Holkar. Malcolm remarks about Mahadji Sindhia: "The countries under his own observation were well managed, as were all those where the inhabitants were peaceable and obedient ; but in his efforts to reduce the chiefs of Hindustan, the Princes of Rajputana, and the petty Rajas of Central India, to the state of subjects, he let loose all the irregular violence of his army ; and the proceedings of some of those he employed to complete the subjugation of the Rajputs were marked by a spirit of rapacity and oppression that has, perhaps, never been surpassed even in

the annals of the Marathas"<sup>45</sup>. The horrors committed by the Pindaris are generally reflected upon the whole course of Maratha relations with Rajputana, but this is hardly fair to the Maratha people.

While we must blame the Marathas for bringing to dust the descendants of those Rajput heroes who had fought for centuries in defence of their liberty and their faith, we must note with regret that the Rajputs of the 18th century were largely responsible for their own sufferings. The old clan feeling prevented unity even in the face of overwhelming disaster. Long submission to the Mughals had weakened the feeling of patriotism; that intense love of liberty, which had been the key to Rajput history for centuries, was no longer an active force in Rajput life. The simple, straightforward Rajput warrior had learned all the arts of the Mughal courtier, and tried to rival the Maratha in political intrigue and barren diplomacy. The Mughal harem had cast its baneful influence on the private life of the Rajput princes and nobles. As we have noted above, we find a descendant of Mirza Raja Jai Singh dressing himself like a courtesan and dancing in his zenana with bells tied to his ankles. Such men could not stand against the new-born imperial zeal of the Marathas, led by capable and ambitious leaders like Peshwa Baji Rao I, Malhar Rao Holkar and Mahadji Sindhia. The Rajput was not yet a stranger to that reckless personal courage which had made him a fitting hero of medieval romance: but personal courage counted for little in long-drawn contests with large Maratha armies. The Europeanised infantry of the Marathas sheltered the impregnable walls of medieval Rajput forts and crushed the proud Rajput cavalry. But the Rajputs remained blind

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<sup>45</sup> *Memoir of Central India*, Vol. I, p. 129.

to the lessons of the age: they recklessly sent their cavalry to destruction in pitched battles with de Boigne's brigades. The nobles lost their accustomed place of honour in the council of their princes, who gave their confidence to barbers, tailors, elephant-drivers and water-carriers. Assassination became a recognised political weapon. Society became so corrupt that even the royal zenana was occasionally polluted by immorality. Rajputana was on the verge of collapse from within while the Marathas were knocking at the gates from without. In his exaggerated admiration for the Rajputs<sup>46</sup> Tod overlooked the grave defects of their character and political organization and portrayed them as helpless victims of unscrupulous aggression.

Despite accumulating distress the Rajput princes did not accept Maratha domination as a final and unchallenged solution of their political problems. In November, 1797, the British Resident with Sindhia reported to the Governor-General that the rulers of Mewar, Marwar and Jaipur had "resolved to bear the yoke of the Marathas no longer, and agreed to compel the forces of Ambaji to quit the territories wrested from them by the late Mahadji Sindhia"<sup>47</sup>. In 1791 Mahadji Sindhia had left Ambaji Ingle to govern Mewar in the name of the Maharana who was unable to restore order in his territory in the face of Chundawat opposition. Under his stern rule, supported by 10,000 Deccani cavalry and four battalions of trained infantry, "the suppression of feuds and exterior aggressions gave to Mewar a degree of tranquillity and happiness to which she had long been a stranger". But this tribute

<sup>46</sup> Referring to Mewar Tod says: "I look upon Mewar as the land of adoption, and, linked with all the associations of my early hopes and their actual realisation, I feel inclined to exclaim with reference to her unmanageable children, Mewar, with all thy faults, I love thee still." (*Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. III, p. 1633).

<sup>47</sup> *Poona Residency Correspondence*, Vol. VIII, pp. 92-93.



of Tod is not unqualified. He says: "So completely were the resources of the country diverted from their honest use, that when, in S. 1851, a marriage was negotiated between the Rana's sister and the prince of Jaipur, the Rana was obliged to borrow £50,000 from the Maratha commander to purchase the nuptial present"<sup>48</sup>. The "Bais' War" in the Deccan, which followed Mahadji Sindhia's death, led to dissensions between Ambaji, who supported Daulat Rao Sindhia, and Lakhwa Dada, Sindhia's viceroy in Hindustan, who supported the Bais. Emboldened by these developments, Rana Bhim Singh attacked those possessions in Ajmer which he had been forced to cede to Mahadji Sindhia. This rash attempt merely implicated Mewar in the feud between Ambaji Ingle and Lakhwa Dada without relaxing the Maratha grip on Mewar. Soon afterwards Mewar fell a prey to the roving adventurer, Jaswant Rao Holkar, and this is how the Rana met his demand for 40 lakhs: "The palace was denuded of everything which could be converted into gold; the females were deprived of every article of luxury and comfort; by which, with contributions levied on the city, twelve lakhs were obtained; while hostages from the household of the Rana and chief citizens were delivered as security for the remainder, and immured in the Maratha camp"<sup>49</sup>. The misfortunes of Mewar and Lakhwa Dada's victory over the Jaipur-Jodhpur coalition in the battle of Malpura (April 16, 1800) nipped in the bud the half-hearted designs of the Rajput princes to free themselves from the Maratha terror.

The political uncertainties in Rajasthan were accentuated by the Second Anglo-Maratha War. It was Lord Wellesley's plan to use the Rajput States as "a barrier

<sup>48</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 520-521.

<sup>49</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 531-532.

against the return of the Marathas to the northern parts of Hindustan"<sup>50</sup>. Accordingly treaties were concluded with Jaipur and Jodhpur in December, 1803. At Jodhpur the position of the new ruler, Man Singh, was then so critical owing to internal troubles fostered by Sawai Singh of Pokaran that he did not hesitate to take advantage of an alliance with the rising British Power. At Jaipur the position was equally favourable from the British point of view. As early as 1794 J. Pillet, a French military adventurer in Jaipur service, had suggested "a defensive and offensive treaty" between Jaipur and the East India Company. He wrote to a British officer: "I see nothing except a well formed alliance between the Jaipur Rajah and the Government of His Britannic Majesty and the East India Company . . . . . that can avert the deluge to descend on the Rajah's head, already preceded by a frightful tempest"<sup>51</sup>. A more direct offer of alliance came after the victory of the Marathas over the Nizam in the battle of Kharda, which led the Rajput princes to apprehend that the Marathas would now "extirpate their Government entirely". The rulers of Jaipur and Kotah sent express messengers to Major Palmer, British Resident with Sindhia, intimating their "readiness to enter into engagements of mutual defence with the Company's government". But Sir John Shore was not prepared to deviate from his policy of non-intervention. Major Palmer informed them that the Governor General was "so connected with the Maratha State by alliance, and by the ties of mutual friendship and good offices", that he could not "with any regard to public faith, or private sentiment, interfere in their proceedings with other States, unless they infringed the rights or

<sup>50</sup> Secret Consultations, September 6, 1804, No. 6. Cf. *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. III, p. 1368.

<sup>51</sup> *Poona Residency Correspondence*, Vol. VIII, No. 1.

security of the Company or its allies"<sup>52</sup>. But the Jaipur Rajah did not "altogether relinquish his ill-founded hopes of obtaining either protection or assistance from the Company's Government". Negotiations continued during the years 1799-1802 and Colonel Collins, British Resident with Sindhia, found that the Jaipur Rajah was "more desirous than ever of engaging in a treaty of defensive alliance with the British Government"<sup>53</sup>. The severance of the "ties of mutual friendship" between the Company and the Marathas in the days of Lord Wellesley necessitated the reversal of Sir John Shore's policy.

Tod speaks enthusiastically of the "enlarged and prophetic views of Marquess Wellesley, which suggested the policy of uniting all the regular Governments in a league against the predatory powers"<sup>54</sup>. The "predatory powers" were, of course, the Marathas, specially Sindhia and Holkar, whose relations with the Pindaris were well known. The "league" of "regular Governments" was, naturally, to be organized and led by the East India Company. The geographical position of the Rajput States as well as their unfriendly relations with the "predatory powers" were to be utilized in the interest of the proposed "league". Lord Wellesley asked his brother, General Arthur Wellesley, to "employ every endeavour to excite those powers (*i.e.*, the Rajput States) against Sindhia" and observed: "The independence of the Rajput chiefs would constitute a power which would form the best security to our north-western frontier in Hindustan . . . ."<sup>55</sup>.

Jaswant Rao Holkar's movements in Hindustan placed the rulers of Marwar and Jaipur in a very difficult position

<sup>52</sup> *Poona Residency Correspondence*, Vol. VIII, No. 19.

<sup>53</sup> *Poona Residency Correspondence*, Vol. IX, Nos. 18, 18A, 18B, 18C, 20, 20A, 20B, 62, 236, 236A, 246, 246A, 246B, 246C.

<sup>54</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. III, p. 1368.

<sup>55</sup> *Poona Residency Correspondence*, Vol. IX, p. 294. See also pp. 298, 365, 368.

and were largely responsible for the cancellation of their treaties with the Company. Man Singh entered into negotiations with him and even helped him by providing shelter for his family. Moreover, he declined to ratify the treaty (already ratified by Lord Wellesley) and proposed several changes. The British authorities were naturally exasperated, and the treaty was cancelled in May, 1804. Jagat Singh of Jaipur was accused of violating the provisions of the treaty by evading his duty of sending military assistance to the Company against Jaswant Rao Holkar<sup>56</sup>. Tod, however, exonerates the Rajput prince and says: "..... we vainly attempted to throw the blame of violating the treaty upon our ally"<sup>57</sup>. Protracted complaints against Jaipur coincided with a change of policy on the part of the British Government. It is well known that during his brief tenure of office for the second time Lord Cornwallis reversed Lord Wellesley's policy and decided to withdraw British protection from the trans-Chambal States. This policy of withdrawal—condemned by Tod as "timid" and "temporising"<sup>58</sup>—was enforced by Sir George Barlow. The alliance with Jaipur was broken up in July, 1806, and "the principal States of India" were "apprized of the grounds" on which this decision of the Company's Government was based<sup>59</sup>. That these "grounds" did not satisfy some of the most well informed and efficient officers of the Company is clear from the following statement of Tod: "The Jaipur Court retained a lively, but no grateful remembrance, of the solemn obligations we contracted with her in 1803, and the facility with which we extricated

<sup>56</sup> Secret Consultations, July 11, 1805, No. 2; December 31, 1805, Nos. 2, 14.

<sup>57</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. III, p. 1367. See A. C. Banerjee, *The Rajput States and the East India Company*, pp. 360-362.

<sup>58</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. III, p. 1368.

<sup>59</sup> Secret Consultations, February 13, 1807, No. 68. Jaipur - Raja's defence: Political Consultations, January 15, 1807, No. 82.

ourselves from them when expediency demanded, whilst we vainly attempted to throw the blame of violating the treaty upon our ally"<sup>60</sup>.

Mewar, troubled continuously by Sindhia and Holkar, sent a *vakil* to Lord Lake at Mathura in June, 1805, offering co-operation against "that race from the South who for the last 35 years have made repeated incursions". Although Lord Lake welcomed this offer "as a complete proof of the Rana's sense of the strength of the British power" Lord Wellesley had "no intention of proceeding to hostilities against Daulat Rao Sindhia or of acting in any manner contrary to the treaty of peace"<sup>61</sup>. After the arrival of Lord Cornwallis the policy of non-intervention in Rajputana was confirmed.

The next important episode affecting the fortunes of the principal Rajput States is the tragic story of Krishnakumari. Tod's tragic narrative<sup>62</sup> is fairly well known, but it is not possible for the critical historian to accept it in toto<sup>63</sup>. Krishnakumari, one of the numerous daughters of Rana Bhim Singh, was reputed to be extremely beautiful<sup>64</sup>. She was first betrothed to Raja Bhim Singh of Jodhpur. After the latter's death in 1803 she was betrothed again to his successor Man Singh. Man Singh offended the Rana by depriving his relative Kishwar Singh of his appanage of Khalirao. The Rana thereupon offered Krishnakumari to Raja Jagat Singh of Jaipur. Raichand, the ambitious *Dewan* of Jaipur, wanted to utilize this marriage for the extension of his master's political influence over Mewar<sup>65</sup>. It was also likely to enhance the social prestige of the Kachhwahs. Malcolm says: "The Siso-

<sup>60</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. III, p. 1367.

<sup>61</sup> Secret Consultations, July 4, 1805, Nos. 20, 21, 22.

<sup>62</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 535-542.

<sup>63</sup> *Modern Review*, April, 1942.

<sup>64</sup> Malcolm, *Memoir of Central India*, Vol. I, p. 341.

<sup>65</sup> *Poona Residency Correspondence*, Vol. IX, No. 136.



diya Kings of Mewar enjoyed the highest rank among the Princes of Rajasthan and an alliance with it was esteemed the greatest honour to which a Prince of that tribe could aspire"<sup>66</sup>. Naturally, Man Singh considered it necessary to prevent an alliance between Mewar and his hereditary rivals - the Kachhwahs. He appealed for help to Daulat Rao Sindhia who was anxious for the consolidation of his influence in Rajputana and could not ignore this excellent opportunity of intervention.

Thus began complicated diplomatic manoeuvres and military operations in which Mewar, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Sindhia, Holkar and the Pindari leader Amir Khan were involved. After five years (1805—1810) of unscrupulous struggle the problem was solved by the murder of the unfortunate princess. According to Tod, Amir Khan gave the Rana a choice between two evils: "either the princess should wed Raja Man, or by her death seal the peace of Rajwara". The Rana preferred his daughter's death to a marriage which he considered dishonourable. Tod's story is in substantial agreement with Amir Khan's own version of the affair as given in *Amir Nama*. But Busawan Lal, the author of *Amir Nama*, says that the Rana agreed to contrive to get rid of his daughter, provided Amir Khan pledged to wrest Khalirao from Man Singh. A modern writer has unreservedly accepted this interpretation of the Rana's conduct and remarked: "The crime was not excused by any sensitive regard for family pride that marked the high-mettled Rajputs of old. It was the result of a sordid bargain".

It is difficult to believe that the Rana was in a position to "bargain" with Amir Khan. Tod says, "..... the Rana was made to see no choice between consigning his beloved

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<sup>66</sup> *Memoir of Central India*, Vol. I, p. 330.

child to the Rathor prince, or witnessing the effects of a more extended dishonour from the vengeance of the Pathan, and the storm of his palace by his licentious adherents,—the fiat passed that Krishnakumari should die". In an official letter dated August 4, 1810, the British Resident in Delhi says clearly that Amir Khan was "responsible for the murder" and adds: "It is stated that the nobles of Udaipur, rendered desperate at the idea of the Rana's being forced by Amir Khan to sanction an alliance which would dishonour the tribe to which he belonged, held a solemn consultation in which it was determined as the only means of avoiding infamy to take off the young lady by poison, which with the concurrence of the unhappy father ..... was actually carried into effect"<sup>67</sup>. According to this version of the story, the decision to murder the princess was adopted by the nobles and carried into effect with the "concurrence" of the Rana. There can be no question, therefore, of a "sordid bargain". The princess, then a girl of sixteen, took the fatal cup of poison on July 21, 1810<sup>68</sup>.

The episode of Krishnakumari did not shock Rajput conscience in Tod's days as much as it does to-day, for female infanticide was a widely prevalent custom in Rajput society. Although Hindu scriptures did not authorise this horrible custom, it was promoted by the customs which regulated marriage among the Rajputs. Tod says: "Not only is inter-marriage prohibited between the same clan (*khanp*), but between those of the same tribe (*got*); and though centuries may have intervened since their separation and branches thus transplanted may have lost their original patronymic, they can never be regrafted on the original stem ..... Every tribe has therefore to look abroad

<sup>67</sup> Political Consultations, August 25, 1810, No. 50.

<sup>68</sup> Ojha, *Udaipur Rajya Ka Itihasa*, p. 698.

to a race distinct from its own, for suitors to the females"<sup>70</sup>. Naturally the demand for dowry went on increasing, till many Rajputs found it impossible to provide as much as was required for marrying their daughters to their equals in family pride. They escaped social degradation by killing their infant daughters. Sawai Jai Singh's attempt to restrict the *daeja* or dower and other marriage expenditure to one year's income of the girl's father did not succeed. Those who could create public opinion against lavish expenditure on marriages—*mangtas* (mendicants), bards, minstrels, jugglers, Brahmins—found their interest in stimulating it, for they profited from liberality on these occasions<sup>70</sup>.

The political significance of the Krishnakumari episode lies in the tragic demonstration of the Rana's helplessness before a Pindari adventurer. A descendant of rulers who had defied Alauddin Khalji, Babur, Akbar and Aurangzib was now too weak to resist the pressure of Amir Khan lest his palace should be stormed by the Pathan's "licentious adherents". Nor was Mewar the only principality helpless before the wily Pathan. Man Singh of Marwar, weakened by a civil war which had been mixed up with a war against Jaipur, had already submitted to that "capricious"<sup>71</sup> and faithless chief<sup>72</sup>, and the latter had captured Nagor from Man Singh's enemies by an act of treachery unparalleled even in that age of degeneration<sup>73</sup>. As Tod says, Amir Khan became "the arbiter of Marwar".

<sup>70</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, p. 741.

<sup>71</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, pp. 740-742.

Captain Brookes wrote in 1859, "..... the expenses of marriage are as great as ever. Till these are reduced, we may expect that female infanticide will continue". (*History of Meywar*, p. 97).

<sup>72</sup> Political Consultations, October 26, 1807, No. 20.

<sup>73</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, p. 1089.

Prinsep, *Memoirs of the Pathan Soldier of Fortune*, p. 348.

<sup>74</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, p. 1090.

Political Consultations, August 29, 1808, No. 58.

He stationed his garrisons in strong fortresses like Nagor. He partitioned the lands of Merta among his followers. He murdered a minister and the chief priest of Man Singh, who was thereupon driven to temporary insanity and compelled to abdicate his authority in favour of his son<sup>74</sup>. The position of Jaipur was hardly better. Metcalfe, British Resident at Delhi, wrote on October 15, 1815: "Of the forces which obey Amir Khan, three armies are now plundering and taking possession of different districts in the Jaipur country ..... The Chiefs, assembled at Jaipur for the defence of the country against the common enemy, have increased the distress of the State by violent dissensions"<sup>75</sup>. Two years earlier Metcalfe had reported that "worn out ..... by a protracted series of miseries, it (Jaipur) has fallen into a condition of extreme degradation...."<sup>76</sup>.

The Rajput princes as well as some far-sighted British officials recognized that nothing but British intervention could rescue Rajputana from this miserable "condition of extreme degradation". Jaipur particularly made repeated requests for British protection, offering either tribute, or territorial cessions, or even "the entire management of the country, the appointment of the ministers, and the complete obedience and subserviency of the court in every way"<sup>77</sup>. As early as 1811 Metcalfe wrote: "It is impossible to live in this part of India and to see the scenes which pass before our eyes without regretting that the Rajput States are not under our protection. A confederation of the Rajput States under the protection of the Central Government must be a favourite object with every man

<sup>74</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, pp. 1091-1092.

<sup>75</sup> Political Consultations, June 14, 1817, No. 13; August 15, 1817, No. 40.

<sup>76</sup> Political Consultations, November 10, 1815, No. 13.

<sup>77</sup> Political Consultations, January 15, 1813, No. 6.

<sup>77</sup> Secret Consultations, April 15, 1816, No. 45.

who has any charge of political duties in this quarter. .... It would connect the Bengal and Bombay territories by a country that might then be considered for all political and military purposes our own..... It would deprive the vagabond armies of India of their principal source for ravage and plunder..... The intervention of the Rajputs under our influence would prevent any co-operation between those Northern and Southern powers that we have reason to suppose ill affected towards us"<sup>78</sup>. The successive Residents in Delhi, Seton and Metcalfe, were in favour of taking the Rajput States under the Company's protection. But the Governor-General, Lord Minto, was not prepared to "enter upon the extensive and complicated field of military and political operations necessarily involved in the adoption" of the policy of intervention"<sup>79</sup>.

Lord Moira initiated a new policy on the eve of the Third Anglo-Maratha War. He was not prepared to hand over Jaipur either to Sindhia or to Amir Khan. "Amir Khan would", he wrote, "as sovereign of Jaipur, add to the native strength of Jaipur an army better composed, higher disciplined, and more fashioned to service than is possessed by any other chieftain in India. The very structure of this army, and all its circumstances, make our opulent provinces the object"<sup>80</sup>. Moreover, the military operations against the Pindaris required co-operation from the Rajput princes for geographical reasons: "The Pindaris were to be rooted out of their haunts which lay in Malwa, somewhat to the east of Ujjain, north of the Narbada, and between Bhopal and the dominions of Sindhia and Holkar: to accomplish this it had been decided to surround them on all sides—on the north and east from

<sup>78</sup> Secret Consultations, July 12, 1811, No. 1.

<sup>79</sup> Secret Consultations, August 16, 1811, No. 2.

<sup>80</sup> Secret Consultations, April 20, 1816, No. 1.



Béngal, on the south from the Deccan, and on the west from Gujarat—and to keep the native States in check”.

As the Pindari War and the Anglo-Mar'atha War merged into one, the Company's Government took advantage of the readiness of the Rajput princes to offer subordinate co-operation to the dominant political power in India. Between November, 1817, and December, 1818, subsidiary treaties were concluded with Karauli, Kotah, Jodhpur, Mewar, Bundi, Bikaner, Kishangarh, Jaipur, Banswara, Pertabgarh, Dungarpur and Jaisalmer. Alwar had concluded subsidiary treaties in 1803 and 1811. Sirohi was the last of the Rajput States to accept the protection of the British Government (September 11, 1823)<sup>81</sup>.

Politically blind, militarily weak, morally and spiritually decaying, the Rajputs were not strong enough to defend their patrimony against the trained battalions of the Marathas. But they were too deeply rooted in the soil to be completely crushed by the unplanned, fitful excursions of the Peshwa, Sindhia and Holkar. The result was the devastation of Rajputana, but not the complete annihilation of the Rajput States. The Rajputs were opium-eaters in more senses than one. But they had the shrewdness to understand that their deliverance from the Maratha terror lay in an alliance with the rising British power. The instinct of self-preservation brought them within the expanding circle of British imperialism. Their agony was prolonged because British policy remained shifting and intractable for many years. Tod was openly critical of that policy of non-intervention which indirectly brought so much misery upon his beloved Rajputs. Crooke accuses him of “ignoring the considerations based on the

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<sup>81</sup> For details see M. S. Mehta, *Lord Hastings and the Indian States*; A. C. Banerjee, *The Rajput States and the East India Company*.

state of the finances of India and the danger of the political situation in Europe which suggested a cautious policy in India"<sup>82</sup>.

Another important factor influencing British policy towards the Rajputs should not be lost sight of. In the early years of the 19th century the fortunes of the Rajputs were inextricably mixed up with those of the Marathas. As long as the shadow of the Maratha Empire survived the Rajputs could not expect British protection, for the East India Company could not offend Sindhia and Holkar by demanding the withdrawal of their stranglehold from Rajputana. Britain came to the rescue of the Rajputs only when their assistance became necessary in the final war for the extermination of the Maratha power.

The treaties dictated by Lord Hastings established peace in Rajputana, but they created new problems which did not escape Tod's notice during his short tenure of supervisory authority in some Rajput States. The defects of the subsidiary system are well known. Owen rightly observed: "the native Prince, being guaranteed in the possession of his dominions, but deprived of so many of the essential attributes of sovereignty, sinks in his own esteem, and loses that stimulus to good government, which is supplied by the fear of rebellion and deposition. He becomes a *roi faineant*, a sensualist, an extortionate miser, or a careless and lax ruler. . . The higher classes, coerced by external ascendancy, in turn lose their self-respect, and degenerate like their master; the people groan under a complicated oppression which is irremediable". In the Rajput States these inherent defects of the subsidiary system were aggravated by the peculiar characteristics of Rajput polity.

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<sup>82</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. III, p. 1368.

Immediately after the conclusion of the treaty the condition of Mewar was found to be so deplorable that Lord Hastings directed Tod to take the entire control of affairs into his own hands and to interfere, if necessary, even in minute details.<sup>83</sup> This was a clear violation of Article 9 of the treaty which provided that the Rana should always remain the "absolute ruler of his own territory" and that British jurisdiction should not be introduced into his principality. "The first point", says Tod, "to effect was the recognition of the prince's authority by his nobles. . . ." After "harassing and painful discussions" he secured the conclusion of an agreement (*Kaulnama*) between the Rana and the chiefs of Mewar (May, 1818). The latter promised to restore all *Khalsa* villages "seized .....in times of trouble and commotion", to perform personal service at Udaipur with the quota of troops with which they were by ancient custom bound to serve, to restore all customs and other duties seized from the State, and not to harbour thieves and robbers. The Rana promised to respect their ancient rights and privileges. Captain Brookes says, "The accomplishment of this unpalatable measure, without the employment, or even the exhibition of force, is evidence, if such were needed, of the great personal influence of Captain Tod, and the authority our attitude, and the presence of our armies in Central India, gave at the time to all our officers employed at Foreign Courts".<sup>84</sup> Tod himself observes that it was a matter of just pride that "the complicated arrangements arising out of this settlement were completed . . . without a shot being fired, or the exhibition of a single British soldier in the country, nor, indeed, within one hundred miles of Udaipur."

<sup>83</sup> Secret Consultations, May 15, 1818, No. 25.

<sup>84</sup> *History of Meywar*, p. 24.

Tod's efforts to improve the administration and restore the prosperity of Mewar were frustrated largely by the opposition of those for whom he laboured. Rana Bhim Singh, says Tod, "had little steadiness of purpose, and was particularly obnoxious to female influence".<sup>85</sup> Even when the Rana agreed to measures suggested by Tod, they were thwarted by the ladies in the household. "Every man too in the city", Tod complained, "from the pettiest cloth-seller to the Rana, discusses public affairs, and every person from the *Pradhan* to the *Passwan* who drives away the flies, assumes the privilege of giving advice".

In 1821 Tod, acting under the instruction of the Supreme Government, began to relax his control over the internal administration of Mewar. The partial restoration of the Rana's authority revived confusion all around.<sup>86</sup> After 1826 the interference of the Political Agent in the internal affairs of the State was "completely and finally withdrawn". The results were not at all satisfactory; neither the Rana nor his ministers and officers could make proper use of the liberty suddenly conferred upon them. The Rana's orders were not obeyed by the *Kamdars*. Robberies were "of almost endless occurrence": two or three cases occurred daily in the town of Udaipur.<sup>87</sup> Matters did not improve even after the death of Bhim Singh (1828). His successor Jowan Singh (who died in 1838), who was a promising prince in his youth,<sup>88</sup> sank into debauchery and intoxication. "The expenses of his court soon doubled those of his father. . . From the effects of bad government, the land revenue rapidly declined".<sup>89</sup>

<sup>85</sup> There may be some truth in the following statement of Brookes (*History of Meywar*, p. 27): "It is probable that the very state of dependence, in which the Rana was placed, chafed his spirit, and induced many of those evils of which the Agent complained".

<sup>86</sup> Cobbe (Political Agent in Mewar) to Ochterlony, September 21, 1823.

<sup>87</sup> Cobbe to Resident in Delhi, June, 1827.

<sup>88</sup> Metcalfe to Secretary to Supreme Government, December 26, 1826.

<sup>89</sup> Brookes, *History of Meywar*, p. 35.

Such was the condition of Mewar after her submission to the East India Company. Her misery was largely due to the vicissitudes through which she had passed in the 18th century, and her rulers were obviously unworthy successors of their great ancestors. But a close study of contemporary British official documents seems to make it clear that the new political system which she entered in 1818 was to some extent responsible for prolongation of her distress. The Rana was protected against external invasions and internal rebellions; but he could not choose his own ministers,<sup>90</sup> British *chuprassies* realised revenues in his territories, and he had to depend upon the favour of the Political Agent for his household expenses. Such conditions do not strengthen the character and sharpen the sense of responsibility of rulers of men. Nor did the restrictions imposed upon the nobles of Mewar by zealous Political Agents make them better guardians of the interests of the State. A medieval political organization dominated by semi-feudal ideas could not be transformed into a modern benevolent bureaucracy in the course of a few years by half-hearted application of inconsistent remedies.

The unfortunate developments in Marwar after the conclusion of the treaty teach the same historical lesson even more forcefully. Man Singh pretended insanity and "listened to all with the most apathetic indifference": the machinery of the State was controlled by a group of nobles known as the "Pokaran faction". Tod says, "Gloom, mistrust, and resentment pervaded the whole feudal body. They saw a contemptible faction sporting with their honour and possessions, from an idea they industriously propagated, that an unseen but mighty power was at hand

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<sup>90</sup> Bhim Singh dismissed his minister Shah Shewlal, who was restored at the insistence of the Political Agent.



to support their acts, given out as those of the prince". The British Government was not unaware of the "total disorganization of the government" in Marwar, but the suggestions of successive Political Agents—including Tod—carried little weight with the crafty ruler and his self-seeking advisers.

In 1820 Man Singh threw off the mask of insanity and inflicted terrible punishment upon the "Pokaran faction". He deliberately adopted the policy of crushing all feudal chiefs irrespective of their loyalty or treachery in the past. His "treachery and cold-blooded tyranny completely estranged all the chiefs". But, as Tod points out, they could not resist the Raja's "mercenary battalions", nor could they defy his "connection with the British Government". The helpless chiefs fled from Man Singh's tyranny to seek refuge in Kotah, Mewar, Bikaner and Jaipur. In 1821 they tried to obtain the mediation of the British authorities who were, however, reluctant to interfere in this delicate quarrel. Aid was refused to the exiled *Sardars*. But an accommodation was effected in 1824 (after Tod's departure from India) through the mediation of the British Agent<sup>91</sup>.

Peace was, however, not restored in Marwar. In 1827 some disaffected nobles of Marwar tried to place the pretender Dhonkal Singh on the *gadi* and with the connivance, if not the active support, of the Jaipur *Darbar*, made preparations for an attack on Man Singh's territory. This plan could not succeed because the British Government intervened. Although Man Singh was saved by the Paramount power (under Article 2 of the treaty) he was told in plain terms that he could not expect a blank cheque against his nobles. The British Government "declared

<sup>91</sup> Aitchison, *Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads*, Vol. III, p. 167.

that although it might perhaps be required to protect the Maharaja against unjust usurpation, or wanton but too powerful rebellion, there was no obligation to support him against universal disaffection and insurrection caused by his own injustice, incapacity, and misrule".<sup>92</sup>

This warning had no practical effect on the course of events in Marwar. Further evidence of Man Singh's "incapacity and misrule" was forthcoming. The climax came in 1839. The lingering disputes with the nobles paralysed the administration. Man Singh was rendered impotent for good or evil by his complete subjection to priestly influence. The British Government could no longer postpone interference. A British force occupied Jodhpur for five months. On September 24, 1839, Man Singh had to execute an Engagement<sup>93</sup> to ensure good government in future. The provisions of this Engagement virtually placed the administration of Marwar under the control of the British Political Agent. But it was a temporary arrangement, binding on Man Singh alone, not on his successor. He died on September 5, 1843, and the long chapter of anarchy and tyranny in Marwar came to an end.

In Jaipur the usual quarrel between the prince and the nobles continued after the conclusion of the treaty, but here the arbitration by the Paramount power was "easy, and left no unpleasant feeling". Serious troubles arose after the death of Sawai Jagat Singh in December, 1818. As he left no natural or adopted heir, rival candidates were put forward by different factions, and at one stage civil war seemed imminent. Tod says, ".....when we intermeddled with the intrigues respecting the succession, our ignorance of established rights and usage rendered the interference offensive, and made the Jaipur chiefs repent the alliance

<sup>92</sup> Aitchison, *Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads*, Vol. III, p. 141.

<sup>93</sup> Aitchison, *Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads*, Vol. III, pp. 168-170.

which temporary policy had induced their prince to accept". The situation was saved by the birth of Sawai Jagat Singh's posthumous son, later called Jai Singh III, in April, 1819.

A long minority (1819—1833) followed, the prince's mother—the Bhattiani Rani—acting as Regent. During this period "Jaipur was a scene of corruption and misgovernment, and the British Government found it necessary to appoint an officer to reside at Jaipur and to authorise him to interfere in the internal administration of the State, with the view of guarding the interests of Government and securing the payment of the tribute".<sup>94</sup> This was, of course, a clear violation of the treaty which provided as follows: "The Maharaja and his heirs and successors shall remain absolute rulers of their territory... and British civil and criminal jurisdiction shall not be introduced into that principality". The following observation of Tod was prophetic: "While we deem ourselves justified in interfering in the two chief branches of government, the succession and finances, how is it possible to avoid being implicated in the acts of the Government functionaries and involved in the party views and intrigues of a court, stigmatized even by the rest of Rajwara with the epithet of *jutha darbar*, the 'lying court'?"

The intrigues of the Bhattiani Rani and her paramour Jota Ram (who was able to occupy the office of minister with the approval of the British Government) alienated the nobility and provoked a civil war in 1830. As Lord William Bentinck was in favour of the policy of non-intervention, the rival parties were left free to fight out their quarrel, although a British force was sent against Jota Ram when he threatened the estates of some nobles whose

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<sup>94</sup> Aitchison, *Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads*, Vol. III, p. 91.

possessions had been guaranteed by the British Government.

The Rani died in 1833. The young prince died two years later ; probably he was poisoned by Jota Ram. The heir to the throne, Ram Singh, son of Jai Singh III, was an infant two years of age. Jota Ram was all-powerful. When the Political Agent came to Jaipur to make enquiries Jota Ram raised a "popular disturbance" in which the Agent was wounded and his Assistant (a British officer) was killed. The bold minister's complicity in these ugly incidents was proved and he was imprisoned for life in the fort of Chunar. The administration of the State was placed under the control of a Council of Regency, which was dominated by the Political Agent. It was under virtual British rule that an era of peace and prosperity began in Jaipur.

This rapid survey of the actual working of the treaties in the three principal States of Rajasthan indicate clearly that no real adjustment was possible between the clan system and the demands of the new age, nor could there be any rational reconciliation of the prince's so-called "absolute power" (formally recognized in the treaties) with the traditional privileges of the nobles and the virtually undefined authority of the Paramount power. Tod rightly criticised "the ill-defined principles which guide all our treaties with the Rajputs ..... which, if not early remedied, will rapidly progress to a state of things full of misery to them, and of inevitable danger to ourselves." Other officers also recognised the incompatibility between the formal treaty rights of the princes and the traditional rights of the chiefs. For example, Metcalfe observed in connection with the disputes between the Jodhpur *Darbar* and the Rathor nobles, "the *Thakurs* have rights as well as the Raja, and we could not undertake to enforce

obedience, without ascertaining that we were not about to become the instruments of oppression".<sup>95</sup> Tod implied that the treaty rights of the princes could not take away the duty of the Paramount power to protect the rights of the nobles. He said, "If it is said that we have tied up our hands by leaving them (*i.e.*, the princes) free agents in their internal administration, then let no offer to support be given to the head, for the oppression of the vassal and his rights, co-equal with those of the sovereign; and if our mediation cannot be exerted, let us withdraw altogether the checks upon the operation of their own system of government, and leave them free agents in reality. A wiser, more humane, and liberal policy would be, to impose upon ourselves the task of understanding their political condition, and to use our just influence for the restoration of their internal prosperity, and with it the peace, present as well as prospective, of an important part of our empire". Such enlightened views were not consistent with the narrow imperial purpose which determined the Company's relations with the Rajput States. The engagements with these States were intended to "give to the British Government the entire control over their political relations and proceedings with each other and with foreign States, secure to them the enjoyment of their territorial possessions and the independent exercise of their internal administration under our protection and guarantee, and render their resources available for defraying the charge that will be incurred in the establishment and support of this system".<sup>96</sup> It was not for the purpose of curing Rajasthan's political ills that the Company had extended its paramountcy over the former Maratha sphere.

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<sup>95</sup> Letter to Supreme Government, January 15, 1818.

<sup>96</sup> Secret Consultations, October 28, 1817, No. 26.



Nor did British paramountcy cure those social and economic ills which had weakened the Rajputs for generations. Indeed, the social structure of the Rajputs had been shaken to its foundations. Female infanticide and the practice of *Sati* continued despite official discouragement from British authorities.<sup>97</sup> Addiction to opium continued to demoralise Rajput society. Tod exacted promises from the rising generation that they would resist initiation in this vice.<sup>98</sup> It is true that the establishment of British suzerainty restored the confidence of the mercantile classes and to some extent revived the prosperity of the Rajput States. But the economic organization of a semi-feudal age showed steadily widening cracks under the increasing pressure of the modern industrial system regulated by an alien ruling class. The might and majesty of Britain gave a new shape to such problems in those parts of India which were under her direct rule, but Rajasthan—where the devitalised past governed the frustrated present—could not emerge into the light and warmth of modern civilization—with its revolutionary social and political implications—as long as the British flag overawed the Rajput castles and paralysed the Rajput mind.

<sup>97</sup> Brookes, *History of Meywar*, p. 97.

Erskine, *Rajputana Gazetteer*, Vol. II, pp. 26-27.

<sup>98</sup> *Annals*, ed. Crooke, Vol. II, pp. 749-750.

## APPENDIX

### NOTE ON TOD'S ANNALS\*

The author of the *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* was the son of an indigo-planter of Mirzapur (U. P.) and his maternal uncles were officers in the East India Company's service. Born in 1782, James Tod entered the Company's Army as a cadet in 1798. In 1805 he was attached to the retinue of Graeme Mercer who represented the Company in the court of Daulat Rao Sindhia. Probably Mercer's influence attracted Tod's attention to the "predatory" policy of the Marathas in Rajputana. It was during the period of his connection with Sindhia's court that Tod began to take an active interest in political and historical matters. Between 1812 and 1817 he collected important data about the geography of Central India and Rajputana, which were utilised by the Company's Army during the Pindari War and the Third Anglo-Maratha War.

In 1813 Tod became Second Assistant to the Political Agent in Sindhia's court. At the end of the Third Anglo-Maratha War he was appointed Political Agent for the Western Rajput States. He retired in 1822, ostensibly on grounds of health, but really on account of the disapproval in high quarters of his pro-Rajput sentiments.<sup>1</sup> Bishop Heber wrote in 1824:

"His misfortune was that, in consequence of his favouring the native princes so much, the Government of Calcutta were led to suspect him of corruption, and con-

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\* English version of the author's article published in the Bengali historical journal *Itihas*, Bhadra, 1358 B.S.

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings of Indian Historical Records Commission, Udaipur session.*

sequently to narrow his powers and associate other officers with him in his trust till he was disgusted and resigned his place. They are now, I believe, well satisfied that their suspicions were groundless. Captain Todd (*sic*) is strenuously vindicated from the charge by all the officers with whom I have conversed, and some of whom had abundant means of knowing what the natives themselves thought of him".<sup>2</sup>

Whatever the reasons might be, Tod's official career had an unpleasant end. Presumably uninterrupted residence in India for 24 years affected his health. He had to face more than one attempt at assassination. He was promoted Lieutenant in 1800, Captain in 1813, Major in 1824 and Lieutenant-Colonel in 1826. He died in 1835.

It was after his retirement that Tod arranged the historical materials collected by him during his official career and put them in a literary shape. The two volumes of his *Annals and Antiquities* were published in London in 1829-32. The first volume was dedicated to King George IV. In the dedication (June 20, 1829) Tod expressed the hope that "the sighs of this ancient and interesting [Rajput] race for the restoration of their former independence, which it would suit our wisest policy to grant, may be deemed not undeserving of Your Majesty's regard". In dedicating the second volume to King William IV Tod observed: "... it has been my endeavour to draw a faithful picture of States, the ruling principle of which is the paternity of the sovereign. That this patriarchal form is the best suited to the genius of the people may be presumed from its durability, which war, famine, and anarchy have failed to destroy . . . My prayer is, that . . . neither the love of conquest, nor false views of policy, may tempt

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<sup>2</sup> *Narrative of a journey through the Upper Provinces*, Vol. II, p. 54.

us to subvert the independence of these States . . ." These words indicate, in substance, Tod's general views on the Rajput political system and the Company's policy towards the Rajput States.

Tod's little known work, *Travels in Western India*, was published in 1839, after his death.

*Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* is a voluminous work, covering 1835 pages in Crooke's three-volume edition. It deals with many matters which usually find no place in any historical work. It is an encyclopaedia on Rajasthan and the Rajputs. The traditional chivalry and generosity of the Rajputs captured Tod's imagination : their sufferings, caused by the "predatory" raids of the Marathas, moved him. His real purpose was to introduce the Rajputs to the Western readers. Pure political history can never reveal the national characteristics of a people and give foreign readers a clear picture of their society and polity, their strength and weakness. To understand a people one must know something about the geography of their homeland, their economic resources and political system, their social organization as also religious ideas and practices, their cultural traditions and heritage. Tod took up his pen with a view to presenting the Rajputs to his countrymen against such a comprehensive background. He worked hard from 1812 to 1822 for collection of materials of different types from different sources. He made careful investigations in different parts of Rajputana and Central India with the assistance of local scholars. To travel in the mountains and desert of Rajasthan was no pleasant or easy task in those days. Tod covered a wide ground at the cost of much personal discomfort. Readers of his "Personal Narrative"<sup>3</sup> and "Sketch of the Indian

<sup>3</sup> Crooke, Vol. II, pp. 760-914 ; Vol. III, pp. 1621-1827.

Desert"<sup>4</sup> (which are parts of *Annals and Antiquities*) and *Travels in Western India* cannot but be impressed by his earnestness for collecting useful data through personal observation and investigation.

Let us refer, first, to the geography of Rajasthan. Tod did not deal with this important subject systematically: repetitions are too frequent in his scattered narrative. The chapter on "Geography of Rajasthan or Rajputana"<sup>5</sup> gives an interesting account of the preparation of the first complete map of Rajasthan. The ignorance of the Company's Government about the geography of Rajasthan would be clear from Tod's observation: "In the maps prior to 1806 nearly all the Western and Central States of Rajasthan will be found wanting". The geographical horizon of the British officers of those days did not extend much beyond the western border of Central India. It was due primarily to Tod's careful and laborious investigations that "in 1815, for the first time, the geography of Rajasthan was put into combined form and presented to the Marquess of Hastings". To be sure, this "combined form" left much to be desired so far as accuracy and completeness were concerned. But Tod is entitled to credit as the pioneer of geographical explorations in Rajasthan.

The twenty-one chapters of Tod's "Personal Narrative" give us a miscellaneous collection of geographical, historical, sociological and religious data. It is a pleasant and instructive travel diary.

The two chapters of Tod's "Sketch of the Indian Desert" contain a detailed account of a little known region of India. Though primarily of geographical interest, the "Sketch" throws some light on historical and sociological developments in that wild tract.

<sup>4</sup> Crooke, Vol. III, pp. 1257-1325.

<sup>5</sup> Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 1-22.



Apart from these general geographical accounts, Tod added geographical notes to his historical sketches of different Rajput States. His description of Marwar, Bikaner, Jaisalmer and Amber<sup>6</sup> gives the uninitiated reader a rough but useful picture of the geographical background of Rathor, Bhatti and Kachchhwa history. The scientific study of geography had not yet begun, and Tod was not a trained geographer. But he displayed unusual interest and commendable discrimination in the collection and presentation of geographical data. It was not only to meet contemporary political and military requirements that Tod took so much trouble for geographical excursions. He was aware of the close connection between geography and history; he did not lose sight of the geographical background of historical developments.

Tod was deeply interested in the economic resources of Rajasthan<sup>7</sup>. The nature and productivity of land, agricultural and industrial products, rainfall, commercial commodities, trade routes: these are some of the subjects to which Tod refers again and again in different chapters. His discussion is not comprehensive, but it is factual. Here he did not depend on "opium-eaters' tales". He collected his data from official records as also from personal observation. Rajasthan is not a fertile, well watered, prosperous tract of productive land. Agricultural production demands hard and persistent struggle against Nature. Hills and desert cover a large part of Rajasthan; cultivable land is naturally scarce. So the heroes of Rajasthan—as well as the cultivators—prized their *bapota* (ancestral land) over all earthly possessions, and no adventure or crime was too big a prize for acquisition of land. Trade and commerce

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<sup>6</sup> Crooke, Vol. II, pp. 1104, 1145-1147, 1248; Vol. III, pp. 1428-1431.

<sup>7</sup> Crooke, Vol. II, pp. 1106-1112, 1150-1156, 1246-1249; Vol. III, pp. 1430-1431.

were monopolised by a particular class constituting a small section of the population ; the armoured knight would not condescend to play the role of a *bania*. These peculiarities of the socio-economic system of Rajasthan did not escape Tod's notice. But his attention was concentrated merely on the collection of facts ; he never tried to establish the co-relation between apparently isolated facts and the evolution of Rajput society and polity. Of course this fundamental defect must be excused in the case of a non-professional historian like Tod, writing in an age which knew nothing of economic history. Grant Duff and Cunningham did not consider it necessary to deal with the economic resources of the Marathas and the Sikhs respectively. We should be grateful to Tod for the facts—however incomplete or haphazardly arranged—which he has left on record for use by later writers.

The social and religious conditions in Rajputana also attracted Tod's attention. In his "Sketch of a Feudal System in Rajasthan"<sup>8</sup> he discusses the relations between the "feudal" chiefs and the cultivators and deals with the different categories of slavery. There are scattered references to the influence of social classification on economic activities, *e.g.* agriculture, industry, trade and commerce. In course of his descriptive surveys of different Rajput States he gives statistical information on the numerical strength, comparative importance etc. of different classes of the population<sup>9</sup>. He was interested in the origin of the terrible ceremony of *Jauhar*, the burning of widows and infanticide. He noticed how infanticide was connected with some peculiar social prejudices.<sup>10</sup> On the place of women in Rajput society he observes :

<sup>8</sup> Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 153-254.

<sup>9</sup> Crooke, Vol. II, pp. 1104-1106, 1146-1149, 1242-1243, 1252-1256 ; Vol. III, pp. 1428-1430.

<sup>10</sup> Crooke, Vol. II, p. 741.

" . . . there are few of the lowest chieftains whose daughters are not instructed both to read and write . . . But of their intellect, and knowledge of mankind, whoever has had to converse with a Rajputni guardian of her son's right, must draw a very different conclusion. Though excluded by the Salic law of India from governing, they are declared to be fit regents during minority ; and the history of India is filled with anecdotes of the able and valiant females in this capacity".

Even the neglected hill tribes of Rajasthan—the Bhils, the Mers, the Minas—did not escape Tod's sympathetic attention. His narrative contains much information about them, although his observations are scattered and incidental.<sup>11</sup>

Tod devoted four long chapters to a descriptive survey of religion in Rajputana.<sup>12</sup> He collected interesting details about the comparative influence of different gods and goddesses, gift of land to Brahmins in the name of religion, Brahmanical influence on society and government, religious practices and festivals, etc.

Jainism was a flourishing faith in Rajasthan. The Jain community occupied a prominent place in trade, commerce and administration. Judges who professed Jainism were opposed to capital punishment. Tod says:

"The officers of the State and revenue are chiefly of the Jain laity, as are the majority of the bankers, from Lahore to the ocean. The chief magistrate and assessors of justice, in Udaipur and most of the towns of Rajasthan, are of this sect : and as their voluntary duties are confined to civil cases, they are as competent in these as they are the reverse in criminal cases, from their tenets forbidding the shedding of blood".

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<sup>11</sup> Crooke, Vol. II, pp. 789-797.

<sup>12</sup> Crooke, Vol. II, pp. 589-706.

Although Rajasthan was the classic land of orthodoxy and religious zeal the Rajput mind did not succumb to the communal frenzy. A mosque built during the reign of Aurangzib at Merta in Marwar was found by Tod in well-preserved condition. The thirty years' war of the Rathors against the intolerant policy of the Emperor did not affect the safety of the mosque. Tod says: "Such is Hindu toleration, that a marble is placed, inscribed both in Hindi and Persian, to protect the mosque from violence".<sup>13</sup>

In spite of their apparently all-consuming interest in fighting and the stern qualities associated with chivalry, the Rajputs did not lose interest in the softer side of life. Art, music, poetry and philosophy attracted them and added grace to their character. Referring to a Rathor prince of Marwar Tod says: "He was versed in philosophical theology, astronomy and the history of his country; and in every branch of poesy, from the sacred canticles of Jayadeva to the couplets of the modern bard, he was an adept. He composed and improvised with facility, and his residence was the rendezvous for every bard of fame".

Tod did not look upon the Rajput as a mere warrior: he viewed Rajput life as a whole. While he appreciated the heroism of the Rajput cavalier he did not shut his eyes to the demoralising effect of addiction to opium upon the Rajput character.<sup>14</sup> He knew how the depredations of the Marathas had affected the cultural traditions and political institutions of Rajasthan.

But his critical far-sight did not extend to the basic defects of the socio-economic and political systems of the Rajputs. That the "Patriarchal" Monarchy to which he paid his tribute (in his dedication of the second volume of his great work) was a weak and politically imperfect

<sup>13</sup> Crooke, Vol. II, p. 855.

<sup>14</sup> Crooke, Vol. II, pp. 749-750.

framework for the Rajput State, he did not realise. 'He was almost blind to the injustice and human suffering associated with a rigid social system dominated by tradition. He attributed the breakdown of Rajasthan's economic structure to the "predatory" raids of the Marathas only, overlooking altogether the effects of the scarcity of cultivable land and the traditional caste monopoly of trade and commerce.

Still we must remember that Tod was the only British historical writer of those days who did not confine his attention to princely battles and oligarchical squabbles. He tried to put his facts in the wider perspective of history, although he was often unaware of the cause-and-effect relation of the data collected by him. He failed to make a critical analysis of the deep-rooted reasons behind Rajasthan's loss of independence despite the reckless courage of the Rajput "feudal" class. He never asked himself why the Rajputs could not build an empire as the Marathas did. The fierce light of the Rajput knight's self-sacrifice—the glitter of his shining sword—dazzled Tod's eyes and almost benumbed his judgement. No wonder the modern student of Rajput history respects him as a collector of facts but does not recognise him as a critical historian or a discriminating judge of Rajput character.

Perhaps Tod himself was conscious that he was not fulfilling the rigorous demands of history. He called his book *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*; he did not call it *History of Rajasthan*. There is a clear distinction between the work of Tod and the works of Grant Duff and Cunningham although the three writers deal with three Indian groups linked together by some common historical peculiarities. Tod's canvas was larger even if his utilisation of sources was less critical. But the writing of annals is



an art which serves the cause of history and cannot, therefore, be ignored by the most discerning and fastidious historian.

The strictly historical portion of Tod's work begins with a discussion of the problem of the origin of the Rajputs.<sup>12</sup> Naturally this discussion—and the conclusion which it led to—could not be based on critical analysis of scientifically acceptable data. Epigraphic evidence was not yet available, nor could the traditions connected with the ruling dynasties of Tod's days be scrutinised in the light of the traditions relating to those dynasties which had been swallowed up by Turkish invasions. He connected current traditions with some social and religious peculiarities of the Rajputs and came to the conclusion that they were of "Scythian" origin. Though this hypothesis is not historically correct, it has a clear historical significance. Tod did not accept the traditional claim of the Rajputs to Aryan or Kshatriya descent. He labelled them as descendants of foreign invading races grouped together under the misleading term "Scythian". Although the problem remains more or less unsolved even to this day, the foreign origin of at least a section of the Rajputs is a generally accepted proposition. Thus Tod may be said to have anticipated the result of later researches although he had to work on the basis of palpably incomplete data.

Of all the Rajput States Tod had special affection for Mewar. Although Mewar was not the leading State of Rajasthan in his days he devoted much more space to the glories of the Guhilots than to those of any other clan. In Crooke's edition the annals of Mewar (exclusive of the survey of religion, society, economic conditions etc.) cover 341 pages; the annals of Marwar cover 193 pages and

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<sup>12</sup> Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 23-96.

those of Amber cover 113 pages. Although the history of Mewar runs to much earlier days than the history of the Rathors and the Kachchhwas, no political observer in the early 19th century would have overlooked the patent fact that, politically speaking, Marwar and Jaipur were the premier States of Rajasthan and were entitled to the historian's attention in a greater measure than Mewar. While the Rathors and the Kachchhwas had prospered under the generous shadow of Mughal patronage the Ranas of Mewar deliberately kept themselves isolated from the favours of the Imperial court. Tod, however, was much more interested in the Rajasthan of pre-Mughal days—days of independence and of unfettered chivalry—than in the devastated, miserable, politically crippled Rajasthan of his own time. His affection for Rajput character was repelled by the vices prevalent in contemporary Rajasthan and he discovered imaginary idols in the annals of the past. To his hungry imagination pre-Mughal Rajasthan was a reality and Mewar—the typical symbol of vanished glory—was an object worthy of adoration. The epic portion of Tod's narrative relates to Mewar; the story of Jaipur is a mere epilogue which was written for current political purposes.

Tod's historical survey is prefaced by a discussion of the sources used by him<sup>16</sup>. He had to rely mainly on the "heroic poems" composed by Rajput bards. He was not unaware of the defects of these legendary verses. He says:

" . . . there is a sort of compact or understanding between the bard and the prince, a barter of 'solid pudding against empty praise', whereby the fidelity of the poetic chronicle is somewhat impaired".

<sup>16</sup> Crooke, Vol. I, pp. lvii-lxiii.

• “A material drawback upon the value of these bardic histories is, that they are confined almost exclusively to the martial exploits of their heroes, and to the *•rang-ran-bhum*, or ‘field of slaughter’. Writing for the amusement of a warlike race, the authors disregard civil matters and the arts and pursuits of peaceful life : love and war are their favourite themes”.

“Again: the bard . . . enters too deeply into the intrigues, as well as the levities, of the court, to be qualified to pronounce a sober judgment upon its acts”.

The care and love of historical truth shown by Tod in his frank criticism of the bardic poems deserve imitation to-day by students of medieval Rajput history. The question may be asked: Why did Tod construct his narrative on the basis of such untrustworthy materials? Two answers are readily available. First, no better materials were available in Tod’s days. Presumably Tod did not venture to call his work *History* because he had to depend mainly on defective annals. Secondly, he could not ignore the qualities of the “heroic poems” because, as he himself says, “the works of the native bard afford many valuable data, in facts, incidents, religious opinions, and traits of manners ; many of which, being carelessly introduced, are thence to be regarded as the least suspicious kind of historical evidence”.

Apart from the “heroic poems” available in Tod’s days—others have come to light since then—Tod utilised materials of different kinds which he described as follows:

“*Raesas* or poetical legends of princes . . . , local Puranas, religious comments, and traditionary couplets : with authorities of a less dubious character, namely, inscriptions, ‘cut on the rock’, coins, copper-plate grants, containing charters of immunities, and expressing many singular features of civil government”.

Although Tod refers to inscriptions, coins and copper-plate grants, the number collected and utilised by him must have been quite small. During the period of his residence in Central India and Rajasthan the prevailing political conditions were not at all favourable to search for and collection of such historical materials. Again, the scientific study of epigraphic and numismatic sources had not yet begun and proper utilisation of such sources, even when these were available, was not possible. Tod himself knew little of the difficult art of deciphering and interpreting inscriptions and coins, nor could he expect expert guidance in such studies. Naturally he took greater interest in the collection of literary materials (which could be easily interpreted by local scholars and bards), including official records, than in the search for epigraphic and numismatic data. He says: "For a period of ten years I was employed, with the aid of a learned Jain, in ransacking every work which could contribute any facts or incidents to the history of the Rajputs, or diffuse any light upon their manners and character".

Tod's historical narrative has lost much of its value for the modern student simply because it is not based on authentic epigraphic and numismatic sources. This defect is noticeable particularly in the case of the early history of the Rajput dynasties. For example, epigraphic sources provide the most reliable information about the history of Mewar till the days of Rana Kumbha. But Tod was unable to utilise these sources, and necessity compelled him to depend primarily on "heroic poems" which are no better than "opium-eaters' tales" so far at least as this period is concerned. Consequently Tod's chapters on the early history of Mewar are almost useless.

From the 13th century onwards the Persian chronicles made references to the affairs of the Rajput States in con-



nection with the gradual Turkish penetration into Rajasthan. Tod did not use these chronicles and naturally he fell into curious errors in dealing with the relations between the Rajputs and the rulers of Delhi. For example, he could have left for us a realistic account of Ala-ud-din Khalji's sack of Chitor if he had been familiar with Amir Khusrau's *Khazain-ul-Futuh*; the 16th century romance *Padumavat* composed by Malik Muhammad Jyasi would not have coloured his imagination and made the highly exaggerated, if not altogether baseless legend of Padmini the centre of his narrative. Similarly, acquaintance with Abul Fazl's *Akbar-Nama* would have enabled him to give a more accurate and complete account of Rana Pratap Singh's struggle against Akbar. Had he studied the Persian sources relating to Jahangir's reign he might have revised his condemnation of Amar Singh and placed the treaty of 1615 in its proper perspective. If he knew the correct dates of the death of the Syed brothers he would not have connected them with the murder of Ajit Singh of Marwar. A thorough study of Persian historical literature is indispensable for every student of medieval Indian history, including the history of the Rajputs specially during the Mughal period. Here Tod's equipment was extremely unsatisfactory.

In the 18th century the Rajputs came into contact—hostile contact—with the Marathas. In the history of Rajasthan the sponsors of *Hindu pad Padshahi* are mere plunderers, not liberators or passionate builders of a Hindu empire on Mughal ruins. Tod was bitter about the Marathas; he exceeded the limits of balanced historical judgement in his condemnation of their “predatory” raids in Rajasthan. The reasons are not far to seek. It was not easy for the average British officer to judge the Marathas in those days except in the light of their hostility



towards the Company's flag. For a friend of the Rajputs the Marathas were open to double condemnation. Tod shared fully the jealousy and hatred which the Rajputs felt for the "Deccani spoliators". Moreover, Tod's lack of familiarity with Marathi news-letters made it impossible for him to look at the affairs of Rajasthan from the Maratha point of view. Official records relating to Rajput-Maratha relations must have been available in the archives of the Rajput States in Tod's days, but there is no indication that he desired or tried to get access to them. For this reason his chapters on political developments in the Rajput States in the 18th century lack in completeness and accuracy. These have been corrected and supplemented by Sir J. N. Sarkar in his *Fall of the Mughal Empire*.

For obvious reasons Tod did not discuss in detail the political transactions between the Rajput States and the East India Company. He had personal knowledge of some of these transactions. He had access to official records. He might have, if he had so desired, left for us a complete and authentic account of the establishment of British suzerainty over the principalities of Rajasthan. But, unlike Grant Duff and Cunningham, he preferred silence, although he did not hesitate to give occasional indication of his disapproval of official policy which appeared to him to be unkind to the gallant Rajputs. As we have seen, in the dedication of the second volume he expressed himself against the subversion of the independence of the Rajput States. Elsewhere he protested more directly against the Company's interpretation of its treaties with the Rajput princes:

"There is a perpetual variation between the spirit and the letter of every treaty; and while the internal independence of every State is the groundwork, it is frittered away and nullified by successive stipulations, and these

positive and negative qualities continue mutually repelling each other, until it is apparent that independence cannot exist under such conditions . . . Our anomalous and inconsistent interference in some cases, and our non-interference in others, operate alike to augment the dislocation induced by long predatory oppression in the various orders of society, instead of restoring that harmony and continuity which had previously existed".<sup>17</sup>

Tod was not in favour of British interference in the internal affairs of the Rajput States, nor could he approve the imposition of heavy tribute which impoverished their exchequers. He wanted to reconcile the Company's supremacy with the age-old political institutions and social arrangements of the Rajputs. But he could not realise that those institutions had lost their vitality and those arrangements had become anachronistic. The spirit of the age and the basic features of foreign rule were altogether inconsistent with the full survival of the old order in Rajasthan. Friendly sympathy clouded Tod's historical judgement and political vision.

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<sup>17</sup> Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 156-162.



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